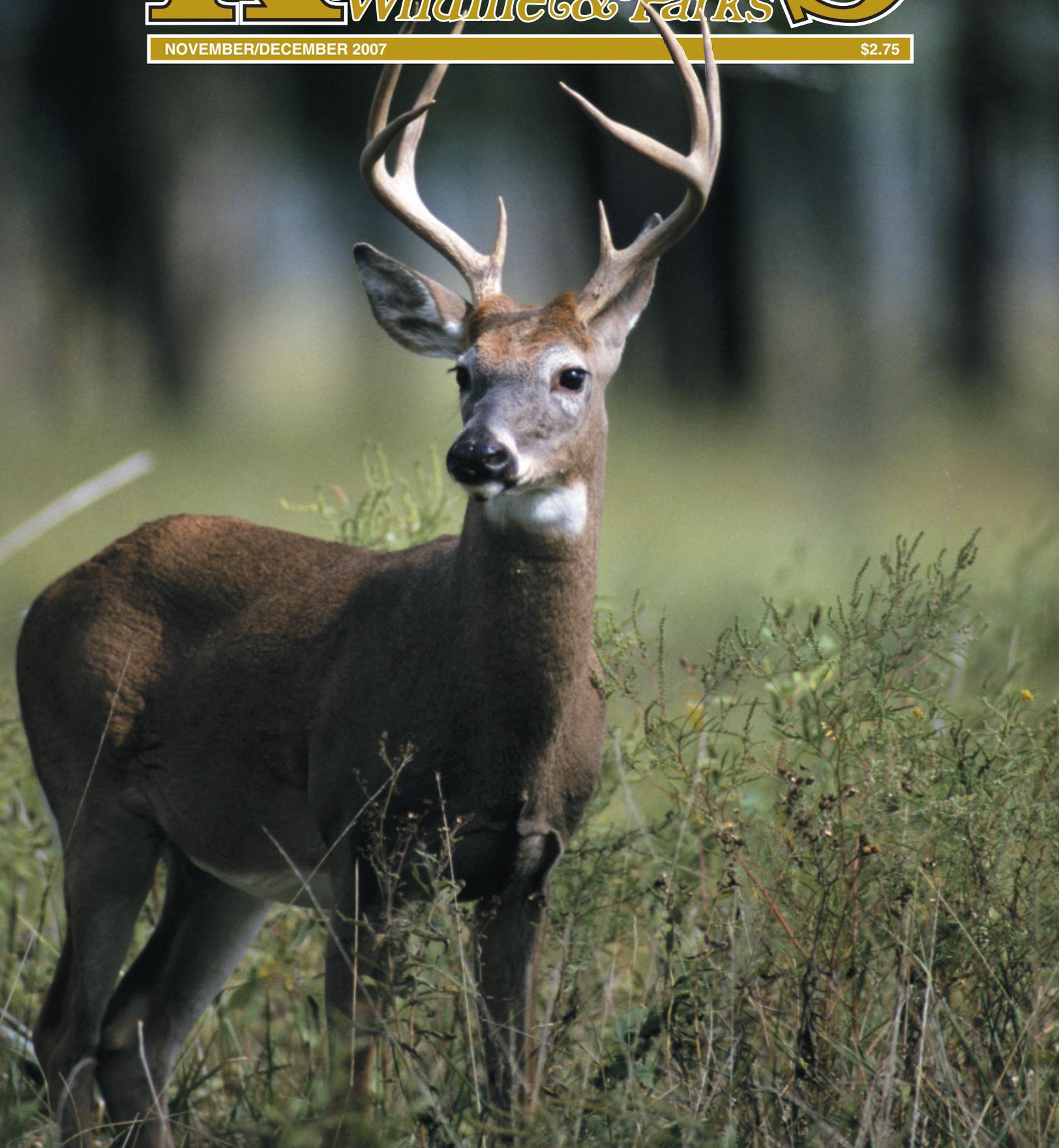


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On Point

by Mike Hayden



Looking To The Future

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks is at a critical juncture. While we have recently battled funding challenges for our state parks, we are now looking at funding challenges for our wildlife programs. It's simple: the number of Kansans who purchase a fishing and hunting license has been in a long-term downward trend and our current programs cost more than our projected annual revenues.

Fee increases may eventually become necessary, but department staff are looking at all facets of our operation to find ways to maintain and increase revenue. We haven't raised fees since 2001, and inflation, as well as rising fuel and energy costs have increased the cost of our day-to-day operations.

Our biggest challenge is one we've been looking at for several years: the decreasing number of hunters and anglers. When we first began addressing this problem, we were concerned about a decrease in the percentage residents who hunted. Not long ago, more than 15 percent of our population hunted. We saw annual fluctuations, usually in response to pheasant numbers, but the overall percentage remained fairly consistent. Resident sales in 1990 included 110,691 hunting licenses, 190,481 fishing licenses, and 47,366 combination hunting/fishing licenses. In 2006, we sold 72,414 hunting licenses, 155,143 fishing licenses and 36,962 combination hunting/fishing licenses to Kansas residents.

As rural as Kansas is, we are not immune to trends states east of here have dealt with for years, specifically, the trend of our people moving from rural communities to urban communities. Today, staff is concerned not just with the percentage of our residents who hunt, but we are looking at historical lows in fishing and hunting license sales. And these decreases are happening even while hunting and

angling opportunities have improved. Waterfowl, deer, turkey, and small game hunting opportunities have been very good in recent years. And with more than 1 million acres available for public hunting, access has never been easier. New species of fish, improved fish culture technology and better management programs have provided angling opportunities undreamed of just 20 years ago. But the numbers have fallen.

As families move to urban communities they quickly lose touch with the land, rural people, and traditions. They are also faced with an overwhelming glut of new activities that compete for their time. In a recent survey of Kansas hunters conducted by the Docking Institute of Fort Hays University, the prevailing reason given by hunters who don't hunt as much as they used to is "other commitments" — work, family, and other activities. That's a tough barrier to overcome.

For the last five years KDWP has continually worked to remove barriers, increase access, improve opportunities and recruit and retain hunters and anglers. Recently, though, staff members from all divisions, sections and levels have been discussing long-term solutions, and a task force has been assembled to develop recommendations. So far the task force has delved far deeper than just hunter or angler recruitment, looking at our fee structure, current programs and their impact, revenue, retention, barriers, constituent attitudes and desires, as well as ways to evaluate programs.

I hope that KDWP will, in the near future, implement a department-wide program that will have far-reaching impacts. We want to ensure that today's youth discover the joys of hunting, fishing, camping, boating, and being outdoors. We must and we will provide the vehicle to get our kids outdoors again.

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Front Cover: In response to Task Force recommendations, new deer regulations will be unveiled in 2008. Photograph by Mike Blair, 600 mm lens, f/9.5 @ 1/125th sec. **Back Cover:** The bald eagle's comeback is one of the most inspirational wildlife success stories. Mike Blair filmed this scene with a 600mm lens, f/8 @ 1/500th sec.



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Changing Times in Deer Management



by Lloyd Fox

big game coordinator, Emporia

photos by Mike Blair

photographer/associate editor, Pratt

In 40 years, deer management in Kansas has evolved from a highly restricted and simple system to one that is complicated and offers many opportunities. Changes coming in 2008 will simplify the system, while accommodating a wide variety of resource stakeholders.

"Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there."

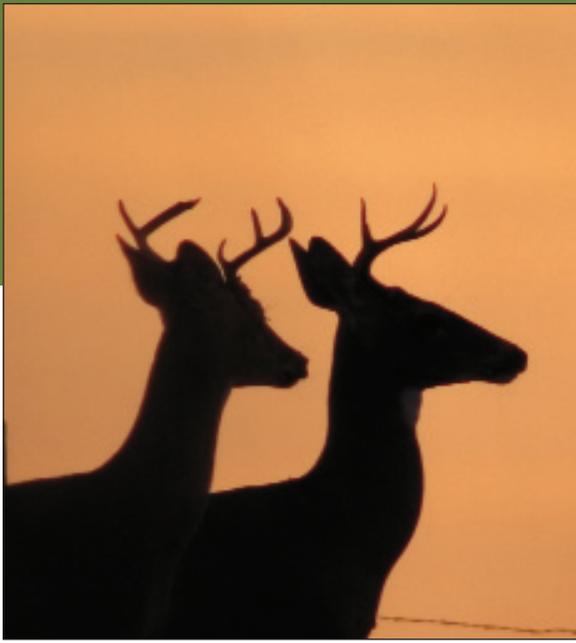
Will Rogers

A new era of deer management is about to begin in Kansas. A 10-member Deer Task Force of Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks employees was formed in 2005 to develop a plan to streamline the deer permit allocation process. A legislative committee had asked the department to examine deer-related statutes and provide recommendations on how to simplify and condense them. Kansas deer regulations had evolved from simple and basic in 1965, our first deer season, to complicated and confusing in recent years. The task force developed preliminary ideas that it presented to the legislature in 2006, but members requested more time for public input. Through 2006, opinion surveys were mailed, a blog site was opened for comments, emails and telephone calls

were taken, and 14 public meetings were conducted around the state. After that process, the task force went back to work and modified the proposal based on the public input. During the 2007 legislative session, the final recommendations were presented and changes to statutes were passed.

A new system of permits, seasons and units will allow flexibility in how this natural resource may be used. With those opportunities come greater responsibilities for hunters and landowners. Personal decisions, not manipulation of the number of permits by Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, will shape the herd that develops from this new system. Take a look at where we have been, and what is in our future.





Naturalists of the late 19th century stated that deer were either already extirpated from the state or soon would be.

Great Start

Kansas is in a region of North America blessed with habitat potential for deer. The soils are rich in plant nutrients and essential minerals for animal health. The plant communities at the edge between the prairie and the forest are ideal for white-tailed deer. The climate is seldom so severe in winter or summer that deer populations are affected.

Deer were plentiful in this region prior to settlement, and the prairies and river corridors of Kansas had an assembly of deer predators. Mountain lions, wolves, bears and human hunters exerted a force on the deer herd, but a natural balance occurred and neither predator nor prey dominated for long. However, as explorers and settlers came, the balance shifted dramatically. The big predators were eliminated. At the same time people systematically and commercially exploited the deer and other natural resources to the brink of extinction.

Naturalists of the late 19th century stated that deer were either already extirpated from the state or soon would be. The future looked gloomy. However, Americans learned from our mistakes. North American conservation programs were developed after the era of over-exploitation in the 19th century.

Unlike most of the country, deer restoration in Kansas was not based on bringing deer from other states to this area. Our progress was slow but eventually spectacular. KDWP has had an amazing run of good luck in deer management. We also had the advantage of being the last state in the nation to re-establish our deer hunting programs. We were able to adopt techniques that

were successful in other states and avoid some of the missteps other state wildlife agencies had experienced.

We avoided approaches like a buck-only hunting season. Buck-only hunting was highly beneficial in other states when herd growth and maximum hunting opportunities were needed. Unfortunately the technique conditioned hunters to oppose the harvest of female deer rather than to match their take to the herd control needed for the current conditions.

Deer management in Kansas isn't something that was invented one day and has stayed static since then. We have gone through a variety of changes before this one came along. For example, the firearms seasons in

Deer Management History in Kansas

- Either sex hunting was allowed without relying on buck-only seasons.
- Deer management units were established based on ecological, not political, boundaries.
- Hunting pressure shifted in time to avoid overharvest of vulnerable adult bucks during the rut.
- Hunter preference, rather than regulated antler point restrictions, has allowed mature bucks to survive.

The unit system of the 1960s was a great idea when we were concerned about preventing too many hunters from going to one area of the state and too few from hunting in another area.

the 1960s lasted only five days. The season was increased to nine days in 1970 for eastern units and in 1973 for all units. Since 1988 the regular firearms season has been 12 days. A variety of additional seasons have been opened as deer populations increased and hunter demands expanded. A muzzleloader season, an extended antlerless-only season, and a season open to youth and people with disabilities have been added to the initial season of the 1960s.

Restricting hunters to a particular equipment type is somewhat unique to Kansas. Part of the reasoning came from the fact that we started with a relatively small deer herd and many people wanted to hunt them. For decades resident deer hunters applied for a limited number of firearms permits and many hunters were unsuccessful in obtaining a permit. Before the modern compound bow became popular, the success rate for archers was much lower than the success rate for hunters using a rifle. As a result it was believed that people using that type of equipment could be allowed to

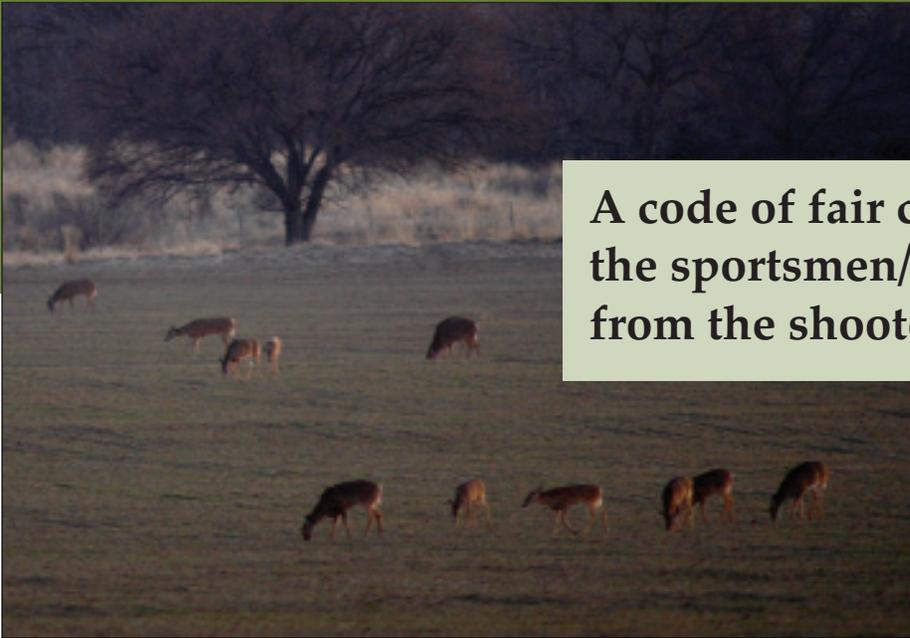
hunt each year. In other states, deer hunters were allowed to obtain two permits, one allowed the hunter to use a firearm while the other restricted the hunter to only archery equipment.

Equipment restrictions continued to be part of the Kansas tradition for many years. In the 1980s, some new developments occurred and some deer hunters were allowed to use more than one equipment type. In the 1980s, some management units had more deer permits available than there were hunters who wanted to hunt there. The department created procedures to handle these "left-over" permits. One of the techniques to encourage hunters to buy these permits was to allow the hunter to use a left-over permit during any season with legal equipment. In 1987, the first "Hunt-On-Your-Own-Land," or HOL permit as it became known, was authorized. It was valid for both species of deer and either sex and allowed the hunter to hunt in any season with the equipment



authorized for that season. To qualify, you had to own or operate at least 80 acres of Kansas ranch or farm land.

While the concept of deer management units has been there from the beginning, the boundaries of those units have changed many times. The unit system of the 1960s was a great idea when we were concerned about preventing too many hunters from going to one area of the state and too few from hunting in another area. People prefer to hunt near home or on a particular property where they have permission to hunt. The unit system was a way to keep the opportunities to obtain a permit balanced for all people who wanted to hunt in that general area. A single statewide program at that time might have created the concern among local residents that people in distant large cities would receive most of the permits while



A code of fair chase distinguished the sportsmen/conservationist from the shooter/killer.

people who lived in the area would receive a small portion.

Units are not a major issue today. Residents may obtain a permit to hunt for a white-tailed deer and select the unit they want. When we switched from a limited drawing system to a system where the hunter could select any unit, we were unable to detect a change in the distribution of hunters. They didn't all rush to one western Kansas unit or go to one public hunting area in the eastern part of the state. They basically went to the same places they had in the past.

Units have not been universally used in Kansas. Archery hunters had permits valid statewide from 1965 until 2005. In 2001, the antlerless-only white-tailed deer permit valid during any season (with legal equipment for that season), statewide was established. With few exceptions those statewide permits did not cause problems in the distribution of the harvest.

One of our biggest concerns today is getting enough hunters to an area to control deer num-

bers. Units can be a hindrance. Each time we draw a line to make a unit, we cut in half the options for the people who live near that line.

As with most rules, there is an exception to the need for units, and the exception is nonresident deer hunters. Nonresident hunters are already mobile and on-the-road. They are not hunting close to home. A few articles in popular hunting magazines, a few more TV programs with huge trophy deer taken in one location, or a major effort by outfitters to develop a mystic for hunting on their property could trigger a clustering of non-resident deer hunters.

Deer management has changed many times in the past. As dramatic as they may seem at first glance, the changes proposed for 2008 are just another stage in the evolution of fitting the deer management program to the resource, the people, and the times.

In North America wildlife species do not belong to individuals. They are held in common ownership by the state as a public resource for all to benefit from. Because of the intense pressure that commercial operations placed on many species in the 19th century, there was a strong sense of concern over negative population effects of most commercial exploitation. The mass killing of wildlife for a few feathers, tongues, or hides without regard to the cumulative effects of that killing on the future of the wildlife population was a key concern in the 1900s.

North American Model of Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife management in North America is different from most of the rest of the world. You may wonder why I bring this up while discussing the new deer permit system that will start in 2008. It is because this model was our standard. As the Deer Task Force developed recommendations for the future, members frequently held the North American Model up and asked if the direction of our proposals was supported by those concepts.



In the second half of the 19th century, North America's wildlife resources went from levels that appeared to provide unlimited bounty to the verge of extinction, and this galvanized people to work together.

The Seven Components of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation are:

1. Wildlife is public trust resource
2. Elimination of markets for game
3. Allocation of wildlife by law
4. Wildlife should only be killed for a legitimate purpose
5. Wildlife are considered an international resource;
6. Science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy
7. Democracy of hunting

Conservation, or the wise use of the resource, was considered appropriate, but only with restraints. The industrial revolution had brought guns, traps and other means of taking wildlife within the economic grasp of the masses of people in North America. To counter that advantage that people had over wildlife, there needed to be self-applied restraints. A code of fair chase distinguished the sportsmen/conservationist from the shooter/killer.

Many citizens in North America had immigrated to this area from parts of the world where they were excluded from hunting because of their social rank or class. The memories of those conditions persisted for generations

and were translated in North America to what is now called the "Democracy of Hunting." In much of the world the European model prevails, and wildlife is allocated by land ownership to a privileged segment of society. As a result, few people hunt, and there are few with a vested interest to support hunting and wildlife. Public supported conservation programs to manage all natural resources are not common under those conditions.

A key to the success of the North American Model was to have many people with a vested interest in the perpetuation of wildlife. In the second half of the 19th century, North America's

wildlife resources went from levels that appeared to provide unlimited bounty to the verge of extinction, and this galvanized people to work together.

Several strong personalities stepped forward to develop conservation. Leading the charge was an unlikely hero, Theodore Roosevelt. Born into the rich and powerful class, he worked with and became a champion of the common citizen. He surrounded himself with good thinkers such as George Bird Grinnel who helped to found The Boone and Crockett Club and the Audubon Society. Another of Roosevelt's inner circle on conservation was Gifford Pinchot, an individual who would reform the management of public lands and establish forestry as a



Deer populations influence the ecosystem, affecting even things like ticks populations that pester people.

science in North America. He is credited with coining the phrase, "conservation ethics."

Parts of the model had to be developed as situations changed. The component of the model that established science as the proper tool for the discharge of wildlife policy did not develop until the 1930s. The droughts and economic depression of the 1930s showed that conservation needed to be a package that included habitat enhancement and population management. Once again, strong leadership was available. People like Aldo Leopold provided the science and presented it with the prose and passion the public supported. Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, and U.S. Representative A. Willis Robertson of Virginia pushed through legislation in 1937 that would be take wildlife conservation in North America to a new level of accountability and academic excellence. The legislation was called the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, or more commonly, the Pittman-Robertson Act. With it the universities, and state and federal wildlife management agencies developed and continue to refine the science of wildlife management and train wildlife managers.



Seeing the Problems in the Road Ahead

Deer management in our region of the world turns out to be simple when there are few deer and many people who want more deer. You squeeze down on the management tools that control hunters and let the deer herd grow to the size you desire.

Habitat is important for all wildlife; however, frequently in deer management the primary aspect in management is a population control factor. Those factors include protection of female deer, and effective enforcement of laws and regulations. The North American hunter readily accepted these techniques. Following the era of overexploitation from 1860 to 1900, the sportsmen of North America wanted limitations on the number of deer that hunters could take and effective law enforcement to make sure the

rules were administered fairly for all. From the 1930s to the 1990s deer herds throughout the country grew and expanded.

In 1997 William McShea, Brian Underwood, and John Rappole brought together the work of 42 scientists under the covers of a book titled *The Science of Overabundance: Deer Ecology and Population Management*. While the effects of too many deer on forest regeneration had been known by deer managers and foresters for decades, with the publication of this book the concept of too many deer became an acceptable value judgment for a variety of people including farmers, motorists, suburban gardeners, bird watchers, and people who just wanted to take walk in the woods. Deer management has consequences for those people, not just deer hunters. The feeding behavior of deer has consequences on habitat for songbirds, reptiles, and small mammals. Deer populations influence the ecosystem, affecting even things like tick



populations that pester people. The American media, radio, TV, and newspapers, recognized these various changes and spread the word.

At the beginning of the 20th century, people wondered if wildlife agencies could limit the deer harvest by hunters to allow the deer herd to survive. As we enter the 21st century, the question is whether or not we have enough hunters to control the growth of the herds. While declining hunter numbers is not as severe in Kansas as it is in much of North America, the trend is real here. In 1967, 204,437 Kansas residents bought hunting licenses. In that year, only 6,450 firearms permits were available for deer hunting and only 2,988 hunters bought archery permits. Less than 5 percent of the Kansas hunters were deer hunters in 1967. The number of Kansas residents who hunt has dropped steadily during the last 40 years. By 2006 the number of people who bought a hunting license or combination hunting and fishing license had dropped to 109,376 (about 26,000 people have lifetime hunting licenses). However, the portion of those hunters who

purchased a deer permit has increased. Last year, 65,101 residents purchased a firearms permit and 19,497 purchased an archery permit. More than 62 percent of Kansas hunters hunted deer in 2006. As the number of hunters decline and the deer herd increases, the question becomes, "Where will hunters needed for herd control in the future come from?"

As we consider the difficulties of controlling deer numbers by encouraging hunters to take deer, we need to consider the trade-offs between recruitment and retention of deer hunters compared to the production of trophy-class deer. Finding the balance between those issues may prove to be more elusive than finding the balance between deer numbers that hunters desire and deer populations the public tolerates because

of the damage deer can cause.

One of the more common complaints voiced in recent years concerned landowner non-resident transferable permits. In the opinion of many people, that system was troublesome and opposite of the direction set up in the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. It resulted in an allocation of permits to the highest bidder. Landowners with large acreages of excellent deer habitat and strong deer management practices were given the same opportunity to apply for one of the limited permits as a person with 80 acres of very poor deer habitat. Hunters receiving one of these permits had no assurance of having a place to hunt. Nonresidents complained that they paid extremely high prices and then found out they had no place to hunt. The transferable

One of the more common complaints voiced in recent years concerned landowner nonresident transferable permits.

Resident hunters will be able to purchase two whitetail permits that will allow them to hunt anywhere in the state during season with the legal equipment.

permit program was confusing and too frequently an illegal transfer occurred.

The transferable permit system will not be included in the 2008 deer management program. Landowners with excellent habitat for deer and a sound program for their property will still have opportunities to lease the hunting access to their land and charge hunters for that privilege. The new system will allow enough permits to meet current demand. Therefore individual hunters the landowner wants to invite to their property will be able to obtain a permit.

A Plan for the Future

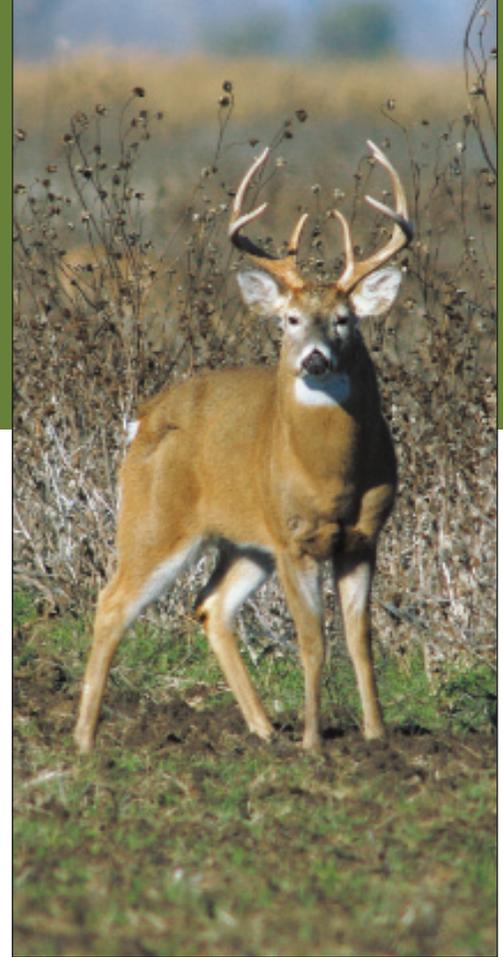
The concepts behind the Deer Task Force's recommendations was to simplify the permit process, to authorize greater opportunities, to encourage hunter recruitment and a retention of the current hunters, and to allow growth based on changes in the deer population and public input. Following are highlights of what the new law will do.

Resident deer hunters will be able to purchase a whitetail either-sex deer permit over the counter that will be valid during any season with equipment legal for that season. The permit will also be valid statewide, on public

and private land. All hunters will be allowed only one permit per year that allows them to harvest a buck. For those hunters who only want to hunt with archery equipment, a statewide archery, either-species, either-sex, permit will be available over-the-counter. The nineteen management units will still be in place to direct and control whitetail antlerless deer harvest. All resident whitetail antlerless permits will cost \$15; the first one purchased by a hunter will be valid statewide, during any season with equipment legal for that season, on public and private land. Additional whitetail antlerless only permits will be restricted to certain management units and specific public lands. The simplicity for resident hunters will be the ability to buy two whitetail permits that will allow them to hunt anywhere in the state during any season with the legal equipment.

Residents will apply for a limited number of firearms or muzzleloader either species permit – permits that allow the holder to take either a mule deer or a white-tailed deer. These permits will be restricted to one of two large units in western Kansas.

Resident landowners will no longer be able to transfer their HOL permits. Instead, a landowner's siblings and lineal



family members and their spouses will be eligible for HOL permits, regardless of their residency. The one permit per 80 acres owned or operated rule is still in effect. This will allow a landowner's brother, daughter or grandson to come back to hunt the family farm, even if they live in another state. This permit will cost \$30 and is valid only on the land owned or operated by the listed landowner. It is an either-species, either-sex permit that may be used during any season with the equipment legal for

Nonresident hunters will still apply for a permit in one of 18 management units, and they will be able to select one adjacent unit in which they can hunt. Quotas for whitetail either-sex permits will be established for each unit based on past actual nonresident demand. Hunters will select one equipment type (archery, muzzleloader, or



Landowners will make decisions on how many hunters they allow and even the type and number of deer the hunters may take.

firearm) at the time of application. Permit numbers will be adjusted annually based on adjustment factors that will include deer population trends, landowner preferences, age structure in the harvest, and habitat conditions.

Nonresident hunters who apply for an archery or muzzleloader whitetail either sex permit in Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 15, or 18 will have the option of entering a drawing for a limited number of mule deer stamps. These stamps will cost an additional \$100 and allow those archers or muzzleloader hunters who draw to harvest either a whitetail or mule deer.

New Responsibilities

Probably the most important influence the new laws and regulations will have on deer management will be the shift in attitudes of the deer hunters and landowners. Deer population management will be scaled to the level of the farm and ranch. The quantity and quality of the deer a hunter or landowner sees in the future will be a result of the

actions they take at the farm level, as well as the actions of adjacent landowners and hunters.

The most popular new deer permit in 2008 for resident deer hunters will be a white-tailed deer, either sex permit that will be valid during all seasons with the equipment that is legal during those seasons, and the permit will be valid statewide. That permit will give residents more flexibility to hunt deer than they have ever had.

Deer hunters will have access to many permits. Those hunters will have decisions to make on how many and what type of deer they will attempt to take. A decision to take all the deer a hunter could potentially take may have negative repercussions on how many deer are there in future years. Some may argue that hunters will ruin things for themselves if the state does not control permit numbers. However, for years Kansas hunters have hunted in a responsible manner. "Bragging rights" frequently revolve around what you might call "counting coup;" not how many deer were taken or even the largest deer, but of deer that were allowed to pass. This his-

tory of self-restraint honors the hunter for the skill it takes to be in a position to kill a deer but then selecting to pass on that opportunity. Yearling bucks are frequently given hunter preference protection so that they will grow larger in future years. In Kansas this has been a self-imposed restriction, and it has succeeded. The age structure of the herd includes a large component of bucks that are 2 1/2 years old or older. In many other states, attempts to regulate hunter behavior by mandating harvest restrictions based on the width of the antlers or number of antler points have failed.

Landowners will make decisions on how many hunters they allow and even the type and number of deer the hunters may take. The landowner's decisions will affect the number of deer remaining in the area and their impact on agricultural production, vehicle accidents, and even the quality of life for people in that area. Those decisions will also have a bearing on how much money the landowner might receive for hunting access to that property. Landowners have an opportunity to lease their property and generate

The level of nonresident permits allotted for 2008 will be set at or above the average level of demand that has occurred in recent years.

income from the hunting opportunities.

Landowners also have an opportunity to shape public opinion. A landowner's decisions regarding access can influence attitudes of an increasing segment of society who are removed from the farm and lack of knowledge and experience about agriculture. It is hard to say how that translates into political support for farm programs, but it never hurts to have friends. This is particularly true for the relationships between landowners and local residents. Many people in our society provide farm and ranch support. Many products and services needed on the farm or ranch are provided by people who may not own or have access to areas to hunt. One has only to look at history and see where restrictions of access to hunt have social consequences. Even today, the concept of the King's deer (landowner's deer) carries a social stigma.

Landowners will find that they can increase their potential income by managing both the deer population and the habitat on their property. The future of deer habitat in Kansas will be with private landowners and federal farm programs.



Nonresident deer hunters will have greater opportunities to enjoy deer hunting in Kansas. The level of nonresident permits allotted for 2008 will be set at or above the average level of demand that has occurred in recent years. Under the Task Force's recommendations, few nonresident deer hunters will be excluded in 2008.

I get many letters, email and phone calls each year from nonresident deer hunters, and one of the most promising comments they make is how nice the people of Kansas have been to them. It is important to maintain that friendly atmosphere in Kansas. Part of the solution will be to maintain a balance between resident deer hunters and nonresident deer hunters; to have enough nonresident hunters to provide an economic boost to rural communities and yet have sufficient places for resident hunters to use so that they will not feel alienated in their own state.

Around the nation we see a trend toward conflicts between

resident and nonresident hunters. This resentment local people have when new people come to an area and use a resource is natural. Resident deer hunters fear a reduction in their hunting opportunities as a result of increased number of nonresidents. When we add the organizing skills of guides and outfitters, employed primarily by non-residents, to the difference in average income between resident and nonresident hunters, it is easy to see why resident deer hunters are concerned. The new system will level the playing field between residents and nonresidents. The new system reduces the need for a middleman in the process of obtaining a permit or gaining access. Hunters will purchase permits from KDWP and deal with landowners for access. When there is a direct negotiation between a hunter and a landowner, the intangible aspects of being a community member will hopefully influence the outcome.



Summary

On May 2, 1903 Theodore Roosevelt spoke at Abilene, Kansas and said:

“There is not in all America a more dangerous trait than the deification of mere smartness unaccompanied by any sense of moral responsibility.”

The originator of the “Square Deal” and architect of our modern National Parks made many memorable statements about conservation; however, that statement seems appropriate before the initiation of the new deer management procedures that will start with the 2008 deer season. Many people have spent many hours to develop the recommendations and then to forge the compromises and cooperation to make these changes. While many people think that this deer management proposal is a smart solution, it remains the task of the common citizen to use their sense of moral responsibility to make it work.

Permits in 2008 will allow

Kansas residents greater flexibility in hunting deer. The hunters will have more options on when they may hunt, the equipment they may use and the places they may seek access. Kansas landowners will find the new system easier and more predictable.

Landowners wishing to hunt deer with their family, even their family that may have moved outside Kansas, will find that they all qualify to hunt on their land, and the landowner will not need to give up their permit to allow a family member to hunt. Youth permits and seasons will aid in hunter recruitment. Non-residents will find more permits available. Landowners who want to lease the hunting opportunities on their property will find that the hunters they want will get the permits they need. Growth and change in the new system will be based on science and data. The number of deer permits available each year will vary based on some common sense factors like the size and trends in the deer population and public input.

One of the biggest changes is one of emphasis in responsibilities. The previous system placed emphasis on the number of permits the department authorized for each unit. That system worked when the deer herd was small and many potential hunters were available. Those days are fading away. We are reaching the limit of number of people who want to hunt deer in Kansas. The new system will rely on hunters and landowners to decide the herd levels on farm and ranch size units.

Many veteran deer hunters in Kansas probably read the opening line from a Will Rogers statement with a touch of remorse. The track that we have followed since 1965 has been very good. There is a fear of change. However, the new system will follow a long tradition in Kansas of selecting the best from an array of options. We cannot live in the 1960s anymore than we can live in the 1830s or some other era. We face the future and pick our path and go forward with hope. ♡



Christmas In the Park

by Lisa Boyles
*administrative assistant
Lovewell State Park*

photos by Mike Blair
photographer/associate editor, Pratt

**What does the staff at Lovewell State Park do to attract visitors on a hot August weekend?
Throw a Christmas Party!**



For the past five years, Lovewell State Park has hosted its annual “Campground Christmas” special event. Visitors to the state park on the third weekend of each August are treated to campsites and cabins decorated in yuletide themes, Christmas carolers, and the occasional visits from Santa Clause, elves, angels, talking reindeer, the Grinch, and even Christmas Elvis!

This event, like many of the special events at Lovewell State Park, began as a way to bring more visitors to the park during late summer when irrigation drawdowns lower the reservoir level and hot summer days reduce the fishing activity. The event was first suggested as a “Christmas in July” themed event patterned after the long-time popular marketing and sales promotions conducted by many businesses. But staff realized that with other well-established and popular events already taking place in July, a later time would be more productive.

The theme was reborn as “Campground Christmas” and found its home on the third weekend of August. The first event in 2003 showed immediate promise, with about 15 campsites decorated with lights, lawn ornaments, and other decorations. Participants commented on the fun they

had decorating and entertaining visitors, and park visitors were amazed at what they saw on a summer night. The staff knew that they had a special event hit on their hands.

The event continued to grow in 2004, with some of the cabin campers getting into the yuletide spirit. One camping group even went as far as holding an actual group Christmas celebration that year at the park. They realized that they camped together all summer long only to separate until spring after heading south for winter or winterizing their campers. So they decided to start their own “Camping Club Christmas.” Leaving no detail undone, they scheduled their vacations, decorated their campsites, hung stockings, cooked turkey and the fixins’, sang Christmas carols, and exchanged gifts.

The campsite decorations just seem to get more and more elaborate and creative every year. Several campers enjoy dressing in Christmas costumes. In 2005, one of the annual participants dressed up as “The Grinch”, complete with green fur and his faithful dog Max (including antlers tied to his head) and mini-Whoville surrounding his campsite. Another participant annually dons his Santa Clause

costume, sits in his comfy Santa chair and visits with all the children in the park, giving them the opportunity to draw up wish lists a bit earlier than other kids in the world.

In 2006, more than 20 campsites were decorated, and Christmas Elvis visited Lovewell State Park. He provided a Vegas-style Elvis show from the front porch of the Frontier camping cabin, entertaining the whole park. The creativity of the participants was boundless, and everyone enjoyed the Christmas carolers who cruised the park for several hours.

The 2007 Campground

Christmas event did not disappoint. Due to hot and windy conditions that complicated setup, lighting and decorations were down a little, but there were still 24 participants. All were adamant that next year the weather would cooperate, and they would be back.

This year's event was highlighted by many decorated campsites and camping cabins, and a few extra mobile displays. Entries were decked out in yuletide themes with lights, holiday cutouts, Christmas trees, live props, and a variety of other traditional and non-traditional decorations. Hundreds of vehicles

circled the park to enjoy the show, taking in all the sights and sounds. Several of the vehicles visited the campgrounds with carolers singing and greeting visitors. A dune buggy adorned with Christmas lights and a lighted motorcycle with Santa riding on the back completed the Holiday Parade.

Winning first place for the second year were a pair of Nebraska camping families. Dean and Janice Ehlers of Superior, Neb. and Bob and Kelly Utecht of Hastings, Neb. transformed the Oakview Camping Shelter into an elaborate gingerbread house, com-



Youngsters from the Himmelberg family of Lawrence, Neb. and the Schmidt family of Blue Hill, Neb. gather for an evening portrait last August. Lovewell State Park's "Christmas In the Park" event attracts more visitors and more elaborate decorations each year.

plete with dry ice “smoke” from the chimney. The Ehlers credit their daughter Lexi for some of the creativity and ingenuity that went into the gingerbread house. All Utecht and Ehlers extended family members present were put to work. Second place went to Todd and Laura Himmelberg of Lawrence, Neb. with their camper decorated in traditional Christmas lights and lighted trees. Third place went to the Scott Nondorf family of Superior, Neb. and the Todd Allen family of Courtland, who transformed their campsites into a living nativity (and snowcones for visitors).

Other unique entries included a fishing Santa “Hooked on Christmas,” reindeer atop camper roofs, Christmas bears, reindeer cutouts, “Redneck Camping Christmas”, and Ruddy the Reindeer pulling a 36-foot camper. Santa once again greeted visitors at Lovewell Marina and Grill on Saturday evening.



All park staff, including Kandi Wallin and Rhonda Elledge, get into the spirit of Christmas in the Park. The August event attracts park visitors at a time of year when visitation traditionally dropped off. It has become a popular event with park patrons.

Of course, all hard work deserves a little reward. A group of volunteer judges were driven around every inch of the park by park manager Rick Cleveland. They viewed the campsites just before dark and

then again after dark on Saturday night with the difficult task of choosing three winners. Some unscrupulous contestants have tried to “bribe” the judges with offers of cookies and milk, hot chocolate with marshmal-





Another popular tradition among Christmas In The Park participants is decorating their vehicles before driving around to view the decorated campsites. The procession of vehicles has become an impromptu Christmas In The Park Parade.

lows, eggnog, snow cones, Christmas candies, and mistletoe. But the judges are unwavering in their duty. They may look for the most creative and elaborate or sometimes the most simple and traditional entries.

The state park staff gets into the spirit as well. Employees might be spotted wearing reindeer antlers or Santa hats. The state park office is adorned with lights around every window, a Christmas tree in the lobby, and a giant blow-up Santa to greet visitors. Each employee has a stocking with their name on it hanging above the permit sales

counter — just hoping for a little treat from Santa. But park staff know that the real gift is in the giving. Each year, staff create handmade award plaques of native cedar for the winner, and rustic cedar reindeer are given to each participant at the awards presentation on Sunday morning. In addition to the unique hand-crafted plaques, each of the top three winners chooses from gift certificates for free nights of camping and utilities, or free camping cabin nights. The names of the remaining participants are then drawn at random for any of the extra coveted cedar reindeer.

“Everyone who participates, and those who just enjoy viewing the decorated campsites all have such a great time,” said Rick Cleveland, Lovewell State Park manager. “This event just gets bigger and better every year. We all work hard on our special events, and it’s rewarding to hear all of the positive comments and to know that people enjoy them so much.”

Lovewell State Park is an 1,100-acre state park in northcentral Kansas, on the northern shore of Lovewell Reservoir. The 3,000-acre reservoir is nestled in the hills of Jewell County, just south of the Nebraska border.

Lovewell State Park has a large constituent base from neighboring Nebraska, but Kansas residents enjoy the quiet, rural setting, as well. The park is staffed by park manager Rick Cleveland, park ranger Thane Loring, maintenance supervisor Dennis Swanson, and administrative assistant Lisa Boyles. The park boasts nearly 150 utility campsites in four campgrounds, nearly unlimited primitive camping with panoramic views of the lake and wooded hills, and six semi-modern camping cabins, which have literally exploded in popularity over the past few years. Other facilities include four modern shower and restroom facilities, fish cleaning stations, and a full-service

marina, which has quickly gained fame for its daily breakfast and smoked barbecue specials. The park also has reservable group shelters, a walk-through archery range, and an historic limestone schoolhouse which hosts non-denominational church services each Sunday from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.

Other notable annual special events at Lovewell State Park include the Kids Fishing Derby the first weekend in June, which set a record this year with 231 kids registered; a fireworks display held each year on the Saturday closest to July 4, which is famous with boaters who watch from the lake; a sand castle and sculpture contest on

the third Sunday of July; and Lovewell's Annual Fun Day, held the first weekend of August, which features a mud volleyball tournament, casting contest, minnow and log races, Frisbee throw, water balloon toss, waterslide contests, and campfire cook-off. The park staff also sponsors a separate chili cookoff event on their designated Free Park Entrance Weekend, which is held the weekend after Labor Day each year. For more information about Lovewell State Park and its facilities or special events, call (785) 753-4971 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or visit KDWP's website at www.kdwp.state.ks.us. 



The first place winners in the 2007 Christmas In The Park competition went to the families of Dan and Janice Ehlers of Superior, Neb. and Bob and Kelly Utecht of Hastings, Neb. for their transformation of the Oakview Camping Shelter into a gingerbread house.

Slug Guns For Kansas Deer



text and photos by
Randy D. Smith, *Dodge City*

In a state where firearms deer hunting is normally associated with rifles, few hunters know much about slug guns. However, short-range slug guns can be just the ticket for hunting near populated areas, and their performance may surprise veteran centerfire hunters.





The author tested a variety of slugs and loads in different guns, including those with rifled barrels and those that were smooth bore. He discovered a wide difference in performance.

It was the final weekend sunrise of the special January whitetail antlerless only season. A cold front had moved in, and I was still-hunting one of my favorite haunts – 480 acres of sandhill cedars and plumb thickets. I was trying to fill my muzzle-loader permit, left unfilled after the regular season.

Regulations for the extended antlerless season allowed me to use any equipment, including a centerfire, but I chose to carry my 12-gauge Mossberg pump shotgun. The gun was equipped with a 24-inch rifled barrel and sported a variable power scope. I was shooting 2 3/4-inch shells with 1-ounce slugs.

I had already filled a couple of Kansas antlerless permits and had taken a buck in Texas, so I was looking for a different hunting experience. I was interested in using a slug gun for deer in a hunting environment that was perfect for it. Once I entered the cedars, the longest shot I was likely to encounter was 60 yards. More likely, my opportunities would be less than 30 yards. My hunting area generally held plenty of deer, but it wasn't popular with hunters because the landowner didn't allow stands and most shot opportunities were brief. It requires experience and patience to effectively still-hunt thick cedars and thickets, and shooting can be frustrating to hunters accustomed to having more time to make a decision.

I knew there were two places I was most likely to see deer. With the wind coming from the northwest, I worked slowly into it toward an irregular line of cedars a marking the edge of a thicket. From there, the terrain broke into a series of rolling tallgrass

sandhills. Deer often congregate here and will break in all directions when they realized they are being stalked. Sometimes they will balk after breaking and occasionally I'll have only a fleeting shot as they either disappear in heavy cover to the west or charge over the hill to the northeast.

A small doe stepped from the cedars and stamped its foot at me from less than 30 yards. I chose not to take this shot and froze in position. In my experience, many times I've seen larger deer step from the cover to see what the "sentry" was encountering. This time, though, does scattered in all directions from out of the cedars. My eye caught the sight of a large doe breaking for the sandhills. I put the scope sight on the front shoulder as the doe quartered away, pulled out to about a two-foot lead, and pulled the trigger. The soft lead slug struck the doe just behind the shoulder blade and the deer literally tumbled head over hooves into the plumb thickets.

Why Use a Slug Gun?

I was impressed with the slug gun's performance. But, frankly, I've enjoyed similar performance from my .45-70 and .50 caliber muzzleloading rifle, and both would function better than the slug gun if I encountered a shot longer than 50 or 60 yards. But I hunt all over the state and there are several locations



This is a three-shot group, off-hand, at 50 yards. The author was shooting a Mossberg smooth bore and Federal Truball loads.

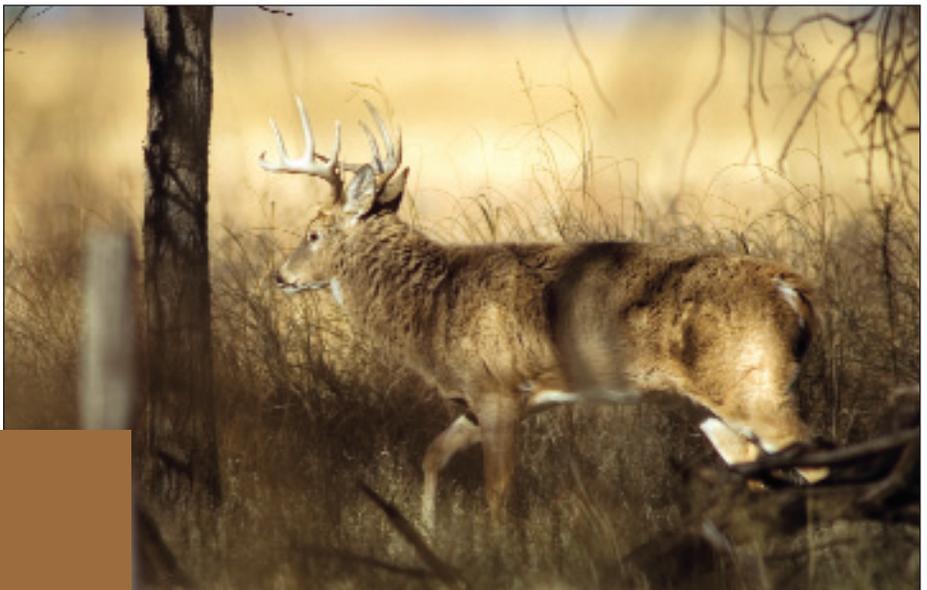
where I will use the slug gun. Heavily populated centers surrounding Topeka and Wichita have excellent whitetail habitat but are laced with small semi-urban farmsteads and homes. I love to hunt these highly productive areas, but I'm more comfortable using something with limited range. There are some areas in southcentral Kansas where winter livestock grazing and feeding is heavily concentrated around narrow strips of wooded creek and river channels. A short-range slug gun is much safer in these areas, both for the livestock and the people. As our white-tailed deer numbers have grown and moved into these less-than-remote areas, finding a safe and effective hunting tool is becoming more important. High deer populations in urban areas can cause damage to ornamental shrubs and trees, damage tree farms and be a danger on highways. A slug gun can be just the ticket to get a hunter into these areas and within its limitations, and after testing I now believe its practical and effective.

My first step was to read a short book, *Mossberg Guide to Modern Slug Shooting . . . And More*. Filled with several interesting charges and

guides, the book proved a valuable resource. I decided to test three different shotgun configurations and several different types of ammunition to see what would work best for me. My usual upland game and waterfowl shotgun is a 12-gauge Model 91 Mossberg Maverick with a 28-inch barrel with a ventilated rib and modified choke. This pump action is chambered for up to 3 1/2-inch shells. I also tested a Mossberg Model 695 bolt action smooth bore shotgun with a 22-inch 12-gauge barrel. This gun will chamber up to 3-inch shells and is normally equipped with an extra-full choke. It is my

favorite turkey hunting shotgun. I mounted a variable scope on the 695 and equipped it with a Hastings sabot discarding rifled choke tube. I also tested a Mossberg Model 500 with a 24-inch fully-rifled barrel and variable scope and a similarly equipped Benelli Nova with an Ithaca rifled barrel.

Ammunition choices can be categorized in to two general types — Foster-style and Brenneke-style slugs for smoothbores and sabot loads for rifled barrels. Foster- and Brenneke-style slugs have been around since the 1930s and are called rifled slugs because of the grooves in the sides. The "rifling" or



side grooves of these soft lead slugs do not impart spin on the projectile but rather allow the slug to pass through various choke constrictions with damage to the barrel. Both of these slug designs utilize a weight-forward design so that the projectile, much like a badminton shuttlecock, will fly in the direction it is aimed without keyholing (keyhole describes the tear in a paper target a bullet makes when it flies with the nose and base out of alignment.)

Foster-style slugs are manufactured by Remington, Winchester, and Federal and are the most popular form of slug. They are offered in 10-, 12-, 20- and .410-gauges (Kansas law allows only 20-gauge or larger).

They can be fired in choke constrictions from cylinder through ultra full but seem to function best in choke constrictions of modified or less. Twelve-gauge slugs weigh from 1 ounce to 1 1/4 ounces. Muzzle velocities range from around 1,000 feet per second (fps) to 1,400 fps. Foster-style slugs are the least expensive, have a great deal of short-range power (exceeding the .30-06 at the muzzle), and are capable of grouping inside of 2 inches at 50 yards. Felt recoil is about the same as heavy shot loads and not uncomfortable. Groups vary dramatically at 100 yards with 8- to 12-inch groups reasonably expected. It is generally conceded that the Foster-style slug is most appropriate for deer hunting at 70 yards or less with 100 yards a reasonable maximum. When you consider that the vast majority of white-tailed deer are taken at less than 70 yards, the Foster style slug is a realistically efficient deer round.

As expected, the gun that performed the poorest was my Model 91 Maverick. Bead sights for pointing rather than aiming were a significant influence upon groups. Still, in situations where my shots would be no farther than 50 yards, the gun works very well. I was able to shoot 2-inch groups at 50 yards with all brands of Foster and Brenneke



The author took this buck in CRP with a pump slug gun. He prefers the pump over the bolt action because he can fire three shots with the pump without taking his eyes from the target in the same time it takes to fire two shots with the bolt action.

style slugs. I would not even attempt a shot at a deer with this gun beyond 70 yards.

Rating the next two guns is a matter of subjective, and I'll let the reader be the judge of which would be best. The decision really depends of the intended use of the gun. Both the Model 500 and the Model 695 were equipped with 1.5-4.5 X variable power scopes, which is, I believe, all the power necessary for slug hunting. I generally carried the Model 500 with the scope set at 1.5 and the Model 695 with the scope set at 4.5. With the rifled choke attached, the bolt action managed one group of 4.5 inches at 100 yards and a cloverleaf at 50 yards, using Hornady H2K sabots. This sabot load utilizes a 300-grain .44 caliber pistol bullet in a 2 3/4-inch shell. I have had great success with this 300-grain bullet over the years in muzzleloaders. The combination of the rigid breech and barrel fit, the rifled choke, a better trigger pull and the scope allowed for great accuracy. I have a .30-30 lever action that I've taken many deer with, but it won't do any better than this shotgun.

The best the Model 500 pump could manage at 100 yards was an 8-inch group using Federal Hydra Shock HPs. The gun was capable of 5-inch groups at

75 yards and groups of less than 2 inches at 50 yards. I could manage 2-inch groups at 50 yards and 6.5-inch groups at 75 yards with the Foster style slugs. It didn't perform well with the Hornady load. Throughout my tests, I found a wide disparity of performance between various configurations of ammunition and guns. The pump gun's plus is that for shots of less than 70 yards, I can send three slugs down range without taking my eye off the target in less time than I can fire two from the bolt action.

General Recommendations

For hunters considering trying a slug gun for Kansas deer hunting, I'll make some general recommendations. First, unless you plan on limiting your shots to very short ranges, you need to improve your sights, either with a scope, peep, or rifle-style sights. A good scope can allow finer accuracy with all slugs and sabots. I would recommend nothing more powerful than 4.5X and be sure the scope has the longer eye relief of around 3.5 inches. You might consider an electronic sight, as well.

Next, if your gun has interchangeable chokes, look into a rifled choke. If you're really serious, a fully-rifled barrel will provide the greatest potential

for tight-grouping sabots and extended range.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, purchase a wide assortment of ammunition and find out which brand, load and type of slug works best in your set up. Then go to the range and practice at distances within your accurate limit. Learn your gun thoroughly. Slug guns are different from conventional cartridge rifles and muzzleloaders. Contrary to what I had heard, though, I did not find any of them unpleasant to shoot.

Slug guns are mandated for big game hunting in some states or portions of states. As urban sprawl continues, this may be a continuing trend. Heavy slugs are powerful and accurate at the ranges for which they are designed, but they lose energy quickly, making them safer under many circumstances than long-range centerfire rifles. As with muzzleloading rifles, slug shotguns increase the challenge of the hunt and the sense of accomplishment. Overall, I enjoyed hunting with them and plan to hunt with them in the future, especially in those special circumstances where I am uncomfortable using a rifle. ♡



The most accurate combination upon further testing turned out to be a Benelli Nova with a rifled Ithaca barrel and 4X scope. With 1 1/4-ounce Foster-style loads, this combination would shoot 4-inch groups at 100 yards.

Bald Eagles by Mike Blair Have Landed

Your first bald eagle is always an unforgettable sight. It was that way for me in 1961, when I spotted a mature bald eagle as my family drove near a winter lake in northeastern Oklahoma. The majestic, white-headed bird was breathtaking, and we sat for long minutes and watched the rare migrant. For days afterward, I drew 2nd grade pictures of eagles and reveled in this exciting wildlife encounter.





I didn't know it at the time, but the national symbol was in danger. Bald eagles had dwindled to 417 nesting pairs in the 48 contiguous United States by 1963, and widespread use of DDT was becoming recognized as a threat to eagles and other raptors. This insecticide interfered with the birds' calcium metabolisms, resulting in thin eggshells that collapsed under the weights of brooding adults. Between that, loss of habitat, and illegal shooting, eagles were threatened with extinction.

The bald eagle was declared an endangered species in 1967. DDT was banned in the U.S. in 1972, and tight restrictions on DDT usage in Canada in the late 1970s eventually resulted in a total ban there in 1989. This, coupled with other conservation measures, resulted in a turnaround for bald eagles. Since then, numbers have rebounded throughout North America. Nesting pairs continued to increase, reaching 10,000 pairs in the lower 48 states by this year.

Because of this, the species was downgraded from “endangered” to “threatened” by 1995. In 1999, a proposal was advanced to remove the bald eagle in the lower 48 states from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. This finally happened in June of this year, capping a comeback story that ranks among the best of wildlife conservation history.

Since the late 1980s, wintering eagles gradually became common in Kansas. History was made in 1989 when the first modern bald eagle nesting pair raised young at Clinton Reservoir. Missouri and other states reported nesting pairs during the next few years as well and from this modest start, nesting eagles have become an expected, though still noteworthy, event in the Sunflower State.

I was surprised in 1994 to find an active bald eagle nest along the North Fork of the Ninnescah River in a central Kansas dry land situation. Normally, eagles nest near or over the open water of large lakes, where fish are easily obtained. The dry-land nest, photographed from a distance to avoid bothering the birds, blew out of the tree in a severe storm. It was rebuilt and continued there for several years, producing some of central Kansas’ first eagle fledglings in 1997. The nest became inactive the next year, when the adult female died.





In 2007, 30 pairs of eagles nested in Kansas. To date, 330 bald eagles have fledged from Kansas nests since 1989. Winter sightings are common now, since eagles from northern states must leave frozen hunting grounds to find open water. Eagles rely on fish and waterfowl for most of their winter diet, and they often follow the large concentrations of geese that winter in the Midwest. In December 2005, nearly 500 eagles, a record number, stayed for a short time at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in northwest Missouri at peak snow goose migration. Quivira NWR in central Kansas has briefly held more than 150 eagles in recent years, and it's not uncommon to see up to 50 wintering eagles there during periods of large waterfowl concentrations.

Eagles have become an urban sighting opportunity as well. Lawrence has a mall on the Kansas River now famous for its close views of perching or flying bald eagles from mall windows. Wichita's Arkansas River flows through the downtown area and attracts numerous waterfowl, also offering common views of juvenile and adult bald eagles.

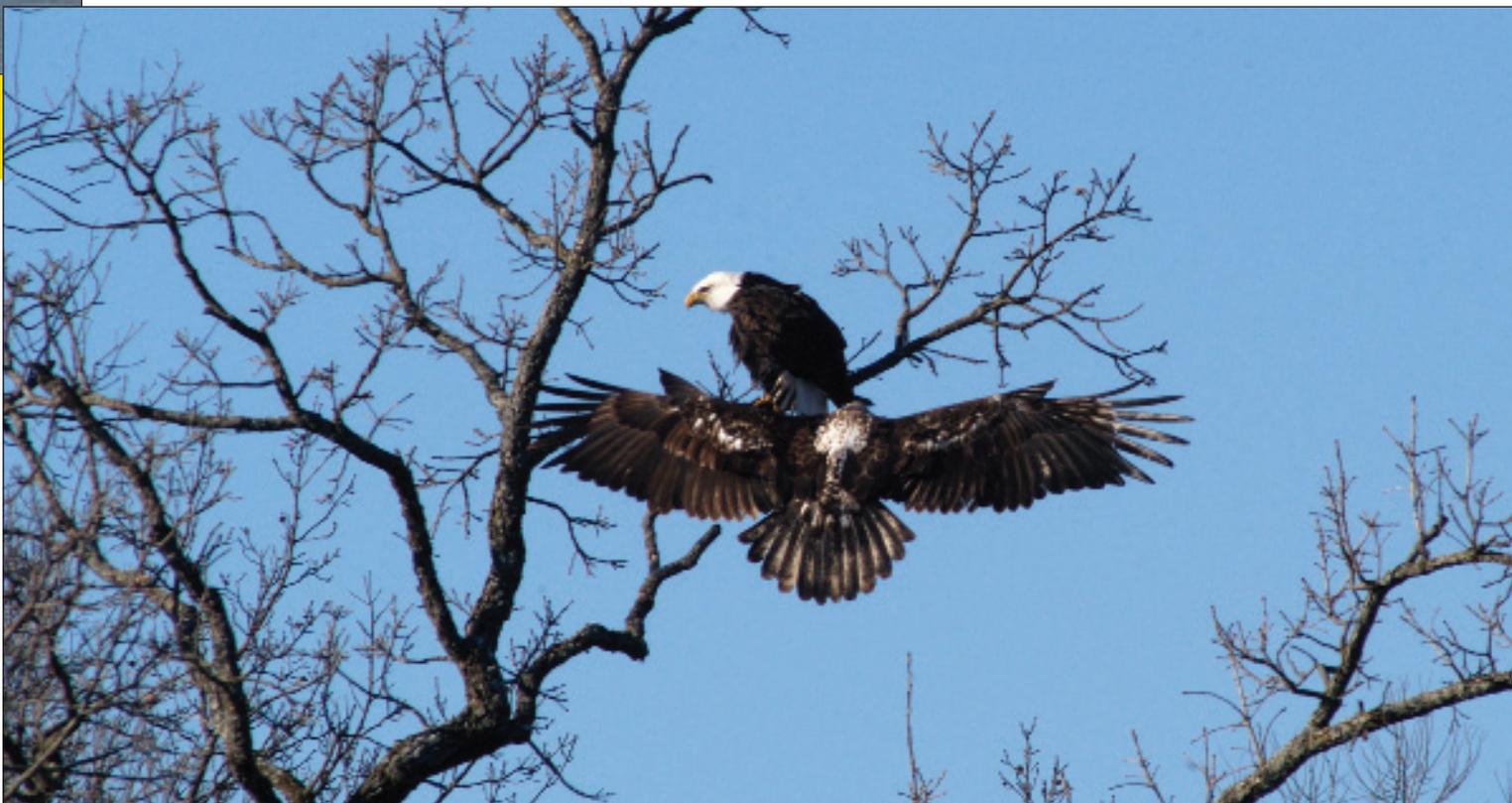
Most Kansas reservoirs hold wintering eagles. Especially when lakes freeze, the large raptors concentrate near tailraces that afford good fishing in open water. At such times, bald eagles are easily viewed from warm cars – an opportunity only dreamed of 50 years ago.



Eagles are long-lived birds, living on average about 20 to 30 years in the wild. The most recognized birds – those with white heads and white tails – are adults. It normally takes young eagles four to five years to develop this coloration and to reach sexual maturity. Juvenile eagles are similar to adults in size, but are brown overall with white blotches throughout the plumage.

Eagle nests are the largest of the bird kingdom, sometimes the size of a small car. A nesting pair may add sticks to the platform throughout the year, and nest weights of more than a ton are not uncommon. For this reason, the nests are easy to recognize, even from great distances.

Eagles catch fish by soaring over water and diving to pluck their prey from the surface. Eagle feet have roughened knobs called spicules to help them hold slippery fish. When live prey is not available, eagles readily feed on carrion such as road-killed deer or dead waterfowl. They are also adept at stealing prey from other predators, using their large size and flight speed to intimidate successful hunters. Eagles also commonly fight among themselves for food.



Seeing eagles in Kansas is always a treat. Through my 25 years of wildlife photography, I've been fortunate to photograph some exciting bald eagle behaviors close-up. Local opportunities are much rarer than in places like Alaska, where eagles can become quite tame and congregate in huge numbers near human habitation. Here, the wide open spaces give them plenty of room to keep their distance. Even so, the sight of our national symbol soaring high above a lake makes a special moment, and reminds us of a wildlife heritage that enriches our lives. 🦅



KDWP

2006 Annual Report

The value of fish, wildlife and state park resources to Kansans is evident in the support they provide for management. As the tables on the following page illustrate, more than 80 percent of the department's operating revenues are supplied by the people who hunt, fish, boat, and use state parks.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks is a cabinet-level agency with a secretary appointed by the governor. A seven-member, bipartisan commission – also appointed by the governor – advises the secretary and sets regulations governing outdoor recreation. The commission conducts business in regular session that are open to the public.

KDWP employs a staff of 410.5 full-time employees in five divisions: Fisheries and Wildlife, Law Enforcement, Parks, Executive Services and Administrative Services. Following is a summary of those divisions and the programs they administer for the people of Kansas:

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Seventy-eight employees staff this division, which is responsible for enforcing the state's wildlife, boating and natural resource laws and regulations. Natural resource officers perform a variety of tasks in addition to law enforcement, from inspection and licensing of game breeders and controlled shooting areas to teaching hunter education classes.

FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

With 126 full-time employees, this division provides the technical expertise and on-the-ground projects to manage fish, wildlife, and public land resources in the state. The Research and Survey Section evaluates fish and wildlife populations, conducts research, monitors environmental conditions, surveys recreationists, and recommends adjustments in fish and wildlife regulations.

The Fish Culture Section operates four hatcheries, producing and stocking millions of sportfish in public waters across the state each year. The Public Lands Section manages department lands for optimum wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for hunters, anglers, birders, and hikers.

PARKS

With 111 full-time employees, this division operates 23 state parks and the Prairie Spirit Rail-Trail, hosting millions of visits annually. Parks staff enforce state park regulations, build and maintain facilities, present educational programs, host major events, and improve access to the lands and waters around state parks.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

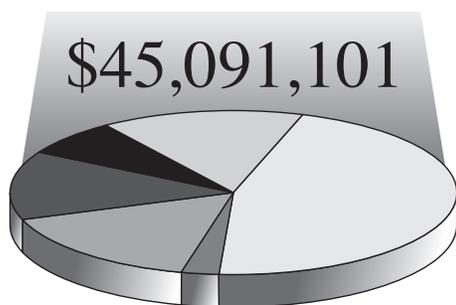
With 21 full-time positions, this division oversees business management, accounting, data processing, planning, and budget efforts of the department. In addition, Administrative Services staff develop and manage the licenses and permits purchased by hunters, anglers, trappers, boaters, and park visitors.

EXECUTIVE SERVICES

This division comprises 74.5 full-time employees. The division includes Information and Education, Engineering, Information Technology, Environmental Services, regional office administrative assistants, Federal Aid/Planning, Human Resources, and Legal Services staff. Engineering Services administers construction and maintenance of facilities on all department-owned lands. The Environmental Services Section reviews publicly-funded development projects across the state, advising developers of state and federal regulations and minimizing impacts on fish and wildlife habitats. The Information and Education Section informs the public through Kansas Wildlife and Parks magazine, the department website, numerous printed brochures, and media releases. The section also administers the hunter, furharvester, bowhunter, and boater education programs of the department, provides environmental education services to schools, and manages nature centers at four locations in the state.

Department staff recognizes the people of Kansas, who provide the means that makes our work possible — and for their dedication to ensuring future generations the same rich variety of outdoor recreation that makes Kansas a great place to live, work, and play.

Revenue



	Hunt/Fish License Sales	\$19,871,626	44%
	Hunt/Fish Federal Aid	\$8,471,717	19%
	Park Permits	\$4,736,647	11%
	Boat Registrations	\$1,027,140	2%
	Other Federal Aid	\$4,674,465	11%
	State General Fund	\$6,309,506	13%
Totals		\$45,091,101	100%

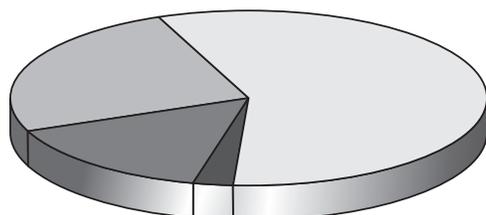
FISHING, HUNTING, FURHARVESTING		
License/permit	Number sold	Revenue
Resident Fish (\$18)	155,143	\$2,792,574
Nonresident Fish (\$40)	8,695	\$347,800
Resident Combination Fish/Hunt (\$36)	36,962	\$1,330,632
Nonresident Combo Hunt/Fish (\$110)	644	\$70,840
Five-Day Trip Fish (\$20)	4,685	\$93,700
24-Hour Fish (\$5)	45,270	\$226,350
3-Pole Permit (\$4)	15,470	\$61,880
Trout Stamp (\$10)	9,650	\$96,500
Lifetime Fish (\$440)	91	\$40,040
Lifetime Comb. Fish/Hunt (\$880)	389	\$342,320
Lifetime Hunt (\$440)	656	\$288,640
Resident Hunt (\$18)	72,414	\$1,303,452
Nonresident Hunt (\$70)	57,994	\$4,059,580
Nonresident Junior Hunt (\$35)	2,294	\$80,290
Controlled Shooting Area (\$15)	9,986	\$149,790
48-Hour Waterfowl (\$25)	593	\$14,825
Resident Deer Permits/Tags (variable)	137,589	\$2,733,240
Nonresident Deer Permits/Tags (variable)	25,350	\$4,295,355
Resident Turkey Permits/Tags (variable)	58,373	\$903,235
Nonresident Turkey Permits/Tags (variable)	18,728	\$491,980
Resident Furharvester (\$18)	5,681	\$102,258
Nonresident Furharvester (\$250)	34	\$8,500
Junior Furharvester (\$10)	188	\$1,880
Nonresident Bobcat License (\$100)	58	\$5,800
Other Big Game/Special Permits (variable)	2501	\$30,165
TOTAL	669,438	\$19,871,626

THREE- YEAR BOAT REGISTRATIONS		
Registration Type	Number Sold	Revenue
Boats (\$30)	34,238	\$1,027,140
TOTAL	34,238	\$1,027,140

STATE PARKS		
Permit Type	Number Sold	Revenue
Annual Vehicle (variable)	33,661	\$1,202,869
Annual Camp (\$150)	3,340	\$501,000
Second Vehicle (variable)	12,342	\$235,410
Duplicate Vehicle (\$10)	154	\$1,540
Daily Vehicle (variable)	201,632	\$1,071,324
Daily Camp (variable)	82,986	\$573,359
14-Day Camp (variable)	923	\$83,663
Utility (1-\$5.50)	12,000	\$66,000
Utility (2-\$7.50)	104,399	\$782,993
Utility (3-\$8.50)	18,372	\$156,162
Prime Sites (#2)	27,906	\$55,812
Group Camping (variable)	438	\$1,069
Annual Trail Permits (\$10)	195	\$1,950
Daily Trail Permits (\$2)	1,748	\$3,496
TOTAL	500,096	\$4,736,647

FEDERAL AID	
Coast Guard (boating safety)	\$587,676
Dingell-Johnson (fish)	\$4,628,312
Pittman-Robertson (wildlife)	\$3,843,405
Other	\$4,674,465
TOTAL	\$13,733,858

Expenditures



	Fish & Wildlife	60%
	Parks	28%
	Administration	9%
	Boating	3%
Totals		100%

Edited by Mark Shoup

NO 100-YEAR FLOODS

Editor:

I read with interest the article in the September/October 2007 issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* entitled "The Worth of Water" (Page 14). In the story, your magazine refers to major events as 100-year floods. Experts in the field of floodplain management do not use the term "100-year flood." There has been confusion in the past when some people who had experienced a flood a year earlier heard that term and assumed they would be safe for the next 99 years. This also gives the impression that the maps must be wrong or that those responsible for developing the maps don't know what they are doing.

The proper term to describe the type of event you wrote about is the "1 percent annual chance flood." This is a flood that has a statistical probability of 1 percent that it will occur during each and every year. Statistically there is a chance of such a flood happening in back to back years or even more than once in the same year. A flood of greater magnitude that has less probability of happening is a 0.2 percent annual chance flood.

*Steve Samuelson, CFM
Division of Water Resources, Topeka*

Dear Mr. Samuelson:

Thanks for the correction. What you say puts things in perspective and makes perfect sense.

—Shoup

DOESN'T LIKE OPENERS

Editor:

I was really unhappy with the 2006 upland bird season openings and closings. It doesn't make a nickel's worth of sense to me to have your dogs point coveys and singles of quail when you can't shoot. That is the law on both ends of the season now.

I would very much like to visit with whoever came up with this idea. What was wrong with the way it was?

Is anyone else in the state unhappy with this deal? Perhaps it's time for some farmers and ranchers around the state to have a say in this.

I have been told that it is all about nonresident hunters, but the quality of the hunting will bring them anyway. Take care of the home folks first.

*Mike McClaskey
Hoyt*

Dear Mr. McClaskey:

We appreciate your input into this subject. While nothing was "wrong" with the old system, you are correct in saying that the basic thinking was that separate openings would entice nonresident hunters to return to the state for a second or third hunt. The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission will look at hunter and landowner surveys after the 2007 season. Results from those surveys and comments from hunters like you will determine if changes will be considered.

—Shoup

DRUM "BUTTONS"

Editor:

I liked your story about the drum fish found in Kansas waters ("Beat Your Drum," *Kansas Wildlife & Parks*, Sept./Oct. 2007, Page 40), but you never mentioned the drum "buttons." They are located just behind the eye on each side of the head. They don't appear to be attached to the fish at all.

I always thought they used the buttons to make their grunting noise. I am sending you a small button from a fish smaller than one pound. The pit in the middle is where I was trying to drill a small hole. I thought if it had a hole in the middle and it was coated with clear nail polish, it would make a neat earring.

They are a hard-fighting fish.

*Clayton Clark
Abilene*

Dear Mr. Clark:

Thanks for the letter and the drum "button." Many fish have these although they appear to be larger in drum than other Kansas fish. Technically, they are called "otoliths," and each fish has two. They are actually ear bones and help the fish sense acceleration and vertical motion, as well as sound.

From the looks of what you started, you might be onto something in attempting to make jewelry out of them.

—Shoup

MORE ON DRUM

Editor:

Thanks so much for Marc Murrell's article on freshwater drum. You rarely see articles on this great fish.

In southeast Texas (Port Arthur), we call the drum "gaspergou." They are great fighters and an excellent food fish. The white meat of the "gou" is a mild, great-tasting treat. The dark meat is very strong tasting, so I carefully fillet it out. There are some folks who like the strong taste; I'm not one of them. I have found that small, live crawdads are the best bait for "gous"; they will, on occasion, take crank baits, especially crawdad look-alikes.

My fishing buddy (Marv Kaiser, deceased) and I were very disappointed when Cowley County State Fishing Lake was drained, refilled, and restocked without the gaspergou. They did introduce the shellcracker, and that is a plus, but I sure do miss the gaspergou.

I would love to find a body of water where the gaspergou is commonly caught. Are you aware of any?

Thanks for your great magazine, and again, thanks for the article on gaspergou.

*Ron Rivers, Ph.D
Winfield*

Dear Dr. Rivers:

Thanks for your input on drum, too. Drum are not stocked in Kansas lakes because Kansas anglers generally do not prefer them, and they are not considered a sportfish. It would seem from

these two letters, however, that there is interest in this fish.

The name "gaspergou" is intriguing, as well. A quick internet search reveals that it is a Cajun word derived from "casburgot" or "casser" (to break) and "burgeau" (a kind of shellfish), which probably comes from the fish's ability to eat mollusks and crustaceans.

Drum are native to most Kansas streams and rivers and thrive in the state's reservoirs, where they grow quite large. The state record is 31 pounds, caught in the Verdigris River near Coffeyville in 1982.

—Shoup

OFFENDED BY CARTOON

Editor:

I recently received the Sept./Oct issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine, and I was offended by the cartoon on page 36, "Way Outside," by Bruce Cochran. The way I read it, the two

hunters and the dog are hilariously laughing at the hunter talking to his wife on the phone.

My husband has hunted ever since I have known him. We have been married for over 40 years, and he still loves me, has sweet names for me, and has the decency to call me while he is out having a good time with the guys. What are they finding so funny when the hunter is expressing love for his wife?

I think this is very degrading to your magazine.

Mary Kauffman
Hutchinson

Dear Mrs. Kauffman:

Sorry you were offended by the cartoon, but I believe Cochran is just having fun with stereotypes of the ways men sometimes poke fun at each other, nothing more. To read into it that there is something wrong in expressing love for one's wife is reading more than is there.

—Shoup

DEATHLOCKED BUCKS

Editor:

I found your article entitled "Deathlocked Bucks" (*Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine, Sept./Oct. 2007, Page 35) very disturbing and gross. The state of Kansas is supposed to pick the best men in the state to be natural resource officers and KDWP staff. Shooting antlers with a gun is gross to me. Did you ever hear of a de-horn cutter we use on cattle?

As far as handling the animals, did you ever hear of a tranquilizing dart? Even our city dog catcher carries one of these in his vehicle. How would you like to have your hands tied together and have someone shoot the tie loose rather than cut it?

I'm 76 years old and have worked around livestock all my life, but if I had to put one down, I did it the humane way.

Harold Gouvion
Lenexa

Dear Mr. Gouvion:

Our officers have every bit as much compassion for these animals as you do, which is why they risk their own safety to free them. The methods of separating locked bucks described in this article are the best of unpleasant choices.

It would be impractical for natural resource officers to be equipped with horn cutters and tranquilizer darts. Cattle horns and deer antlers are very different; horns consist of keratin and other proteins, while antlers are made of very hard bone. And most officers don't encounter locked bucks even once a year.

In addition, an antler has no nerve endings in it, so having one quickly knocked off might be a jolt but hardly equivalent to the suffering of being locked to another buck. And many of these deer are in such a weakened state by the time they are found that tranquilization may likely kill them.

Locked bucks are unpleasant events of nature, but when they happen, please rest assured that our natural resource officers do everything they can to save them or relieve their suffering humanely.

—Shoup



Hawk Poacher Caught

On Oct. 4, 2006, I received a report that there were a number of dead hawks in a soybean stubble field south of Virgil in Greenwood County. Upon visiting the field, I found seven dead Swainson's hawks. The birds had been scavenged by other animals, and it was not apparent what killed the hawks. I collected the hawks and sent them to the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Ore., for necropsy.

The results of the necropsy revealed that the hawks were killed with a small caliber rifle, but while waiting for word from the forensics lab about the hawks, I had already received several tips on an individual who may have shot them. On July 10, 2007, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service special agent Kenny Kessler and I confronted the person suspected of shooting the Swainson's hawks that previous fall. During our interview, the suspect confessed to shooting the hawks with his .22-250 caliber rifle as part of an "underground sport" in the area. He was issued a violation notice in federal court for the crime, where he paid a \$2,025 fine.

Swainson's hawks migrate through Kansas in flocks in the spring and fall and are often seen in large numbers during the migration. Shooting hawks is an ongoing problem in this part of the state, where the poachers blame hawks for declining quail numbers. Ironically, Swainson's and other hawks prey on many animals – such as snakes and rodents – that are known to destroy quail nests. Their benefit to quail far outweighs any theoretical negative impact.

—NRO, Dan Melson, Eureka



• K-9 Nabs Drug Suspect

On July 16, I was asked to respond to a tracking request in Greenwood County. My K-9 partner, Chase, and I arrived at a small trailer house near the town of Fall River, and I learned that while a search warrant was being served at a suspected methamphetamine lab, a suspect from the residence had fled into the woods on foot. Members of the Kansas Highway Patrol warrant team provided a good location where the suspect was last seen entering the woods near the rural home, and Chase began to search for the suspect's scent.

We began tracking at approximately 6:45 a.m. with two Greenwood County deputies joining us. Chase immediately picked up the scent left by the suspect and began tracking him. Shortly after starting the track, I also noticed footprints, so it was clear that we were on the suspect's trail.

Approximately 23 minutes after we began following the

suspect's trail, which covered approximately 3/4 mile into the woods, we found and arrested the suspect hiding in a creek. The suspect has been charged in Greenwood County District Court with drug and weapons violations and resisting arrest. As of this writing, he was awaiting trial.

—NRO, Dan Melson, Eureka

• Tornado Responders

Kansas natural resource officers responded to Greensburg the night the tornado hit May 4. Between May 4 and May 28, 24 KDWP officers served on post storm duties. Officers worked 12- to 14-hour shifts through the night, ensuring the town was safe from looters. KDWP officers served with police and sheriffs' officers from throughout Kansas to assist the citizens of Greensburg. Each night shift consisted of 40 to 60 law enforcement officers. KDWP officers worked a total of 1,720 hours. Responding officers were from regions 1, 3, and 4.

—Greg Salisbury, natural resource officer, Salina



NRO Clint Lee, Arkansas City, prepares to spend the night of May 20 controlling access to the town of Greensburg. NROs worked with law enforcement from all over the state assisting with security in and around Greensburg following the devastating tornado that struck last May.

• New for 2007

In the July/Aug. 2007 issue, we covered the apprentice hunting (Page 38), a new law this year. The following are other new hunting rules and regulations for 2007:

• BIG GAME

The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission may annually issue as many as 10 youth "Hunt of a Lifetime" deer permits. The permits are designated for youth younger than 21 who are disabled or experiencing life-threatening illnesses.

Whitetail Antlerless-Only Deer game tags are valid for

use in deer management units 1 and 2.

Whitetail Antlerless-Only Deer game tags, normally restricted to private lands and WIHA areas, may be used on Cedar Bluff Wildlife Area.

• GAME BREEDERS

Holders of game breeder permits may recapture any game bird that has escaped from confinement if the escaped bird is one the breeder is permitted to raise and sell.

• LICENSES AND PERMITS

Delinquent child support debtors may not purchase licenses or permits issued by KDWP.

—Shoup

DEADBEAT PARENTS BEWARE

A bill signed into law last spring by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius will ensure that delinquent child support debtors are not issued licenses or permits by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

House Bill 2393 requires the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) to maintain a quarterly-updated list of individuals who are delinquent on court-ordered child support. KDWP will receive the electronic files of child support debtors to match against applicants for licenses or permits. HB 2393 also outlines procedures by which individuals may be removed from the list of delinquent child support debtors, reinstating privileges for hunting and fishing licenses and permits.

According to the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, this new law will keep Kansas in compliance with the Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, thus preventing the loss of approximately \$36 million in federal child support enforcement funds each year.

KDWP's Kansas Automated Licensing System, used wherever licenses and permits are sold, is programmed to identify anyone on the SRS list of delinquent parents. Those who attempt to purchase any license, permit, or stamp issued by KDWP will be automatically flagged and given information regarding this new law.

—Mathews

Avian Influenza Search

KDWP is participating in a national surveillance program aimed at early detection of Asian bird flu if it finds its way into North America, and hunters play a vital role in this effort. The strain of the disease being targeted – HPAI H5N1 – is currently circulating in birds overseas. More than 100,000 birds were tested across the U.S. last year, and no evidence of the disease was detected.

Early detection surveillance includes two different methods. KDWP is asking hunters to let agency staff swab their bagged birds for testing. The sampling procedure involves taking a quick swab of the throat and intestinal tract of birds. This does not affect the edibility or quality of the meat. KDWP's goal is to swab 1,100 birds, with an emphasis on mallards, teal, and other dabbling duck species.

In addition to sampling hunter-bagged birds, KDWP is conducting regular mortality surveys in selected areas where waterfowl congregate. Staff in the field watch for unusual deaths in sensitive waterfowl species such as wood ducks, diving ducks, shovelers, gulls, terns, grebes, and some shorebirds.

The Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory provides rapid testing services to all agencies involved in the effort. In addition, the

Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) have established an Avian Influenza Hotline – 1-800-566-4518 – for people to report concerns or ask questions regarding avian influenza.

Hunters can help by volunteering their birds for swabbing when requested. (The test is not a guarantee of food safety.) Biologists will also perform a quick inspection of the bird to determine age and sex. Game bird breeders can phone 785-296-2326 to have their birds tested on a quarterly basis. There is currently no charge for this service.

Members of the general public may notify KDWP or USDA Wildlife Services if they notice any unusual deaths in waterfowl species. The USDA also recommends reporting deaths in species such as songbirds when there are five or more individuals involved. Their toll-free number is 1-866-487-3297. Carcasses must be freshly dead or chilled to be of diagnostic value.

To date, the Asian strain of the bird flu has not been detected in North America, so the chances of a hunter encountering the virus are extremely low. Furthermore, in its current form, the virus is not easily contracted by humans.

However, it's a good idea for hunters to take routine precautions when handling wild game, such as avoiding sick game,

washing hands and cleaning equipment, and thoroughly cooking game.

—Helen Hands,
wildlife biologist,
Cheyenne Bottoms

Recreation Database

Recreation Finder is now online at maps.kansasgis.org/recfinder/public/index.cfm. This online resource allows users to search a database of more than 450 trails, 3,500 parks, and 12,500 recreation facilities across the state where they may participate in their favorite outdoor recreation activities. Users can search for parks and facilities by name, location, park type, or facilities available.

Users can customize the map view by clicking the "customize tab." This allows various levels of detail to be illustrated and ultimately printed. The map can become a bit overloaded if all the layers are illustrated, so this option is useful to reduce some of the clutter. A map of a selected destination may be printed by clicking the "print" tab. Trails are similarly searchable. Click the "trails" tab at the top and look for trails by trail name, difficulty, location, or type of use. A brief summary of trail features is provided, including length, surface, and allowable uses.

Recreation Finder is a collaborative effort of the Kansas Recreation and Park Association, the Sunflower Foundation,

Zebra Mussels In Cheney And Perry Reservoirs

KDWP has confirmed that zebra mussels have been found in Cheney Reservoir. During routine lake inspections late last summer, KDWP district fisheries biologist Jon Stein collected three zebra mussel adults. After the initial discovery, KDWP surveyed the lake shoreline in search of more mussels. Zebra mussels were found at many locations around the lake at very low densities. In October, divers found a few adult zebra mussels in Perry Reservoir near Topeka.

Zebra mussels reproduce rapidly. They can attach to and cover any hard structure in water, including native mussels, pipes, water supply structures, rocks, piers, flooded timber, boat hulls, and aquatic motor parts, often clogging them to the point of malfunction. Once zebra mussels become established, they are nearly impossible to eradicate.

The zebra mussel is a fingernail-sized, D-shaped mollusk that typically has a dark and white (zebra-like) pattern on the shell. Since introduction into the United States in 1988, it has rapidly spread from the Great Lakes Region to Midwestern streams. It has been found in El Dorado Reservoir in 2003, Winfield City Lake in 2006, and now Cheney and Perry reservoirs. KDWP will work with the all agencies and entities to ensure an effective management plan is followed.

Zebra mussel larvae are free-floating and microscopic, which enables aquatic users to unknowingly transport them between water bodies. Lake users must adhere to the following precautions to help prevent the spread of zebra mussels:

- learn to identify aquatic nuisance species, such as zebra mussels;
- never move fish or water from one body of water to another;
- empty bait buckets on dry land, not into lakes;
- inspect boats, trailers, skis, anchors, and all other equipment and remove any visible organisms and vegetation; and
- wash equipment with hot (140-degree) water, a 10-percent chlorine and water solution, or dry for at least five days to remove or kill species that are not visible. Phone 620-342-0658 or email jasong@wp.state.ks.us if any nuisance species are found.

For general information about zebra mussels, visit the KDWP website and type "zebra mussels" in the search box.

—Jason Goeckler, aquatic nuisance specialist, Emporia



KDWP, the Kansas Geological Survey's Data Access Support Center, Kansas State University's Department of Horticulture Forestry and Recreation Resources, and park and recreation professionals and other city and school district staff members statewide.

—Mathews

Bass Virus Detected

KDWP fisheries staff have confirmed the presence of largemouth bass virus (LMBV) at Crawford State Fishing Lake

in southeast Kansas. Testing of bass from the lake was conducted in response to declines in Crawford bass populations.

An aggressive program of monitoring for the virus has begun, particularly at Farlington Fish Hatchery, which uses Crawford State Fishing Lake for its water supply. No fish will be moved from the Farlington hatchery until testing for the presence of the virus there is completed. Staff at fish hatcheries in Pratt and Meade also are monitoring for the virus at those facilities. Milford Fish Hatchery is currently under-

going renovation and is out of production this year.

Scientists do not know enough yet about the virus to determine if it will have harmful long-lasting effects on bass populations although it appears from early occurrences across the U. S. that it does not. While other fish species – including smallmouth bass, spotted bass, bluegill, white crappie, and black crappie – have been infected with the virus, it has so far proved to be fatal only for largemouth bass.

Adult bass of 2 pounds or more seem to be the most

susceptible to the virus. Almost all bass die offs documented in other states have occurred from June through September.

The virus is not known to infect any warm-blooded animals or humans. Common-sense precautions are recommended, such as thoroughly cooking any fish and not consuming fish that are found dead or appear sickly.

—Shoup

Deer Season Date Correction

The 2007 Kansas Hunting and Furharvesting Regulations Summary contains errors for firearms deer seasons on the Ft. Leavenworth and the Smoky Hill Air National Guard subunits. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

The correct dates for these two subunits are as follows:

- **Firearms Seasons Ft. Leavenworth** – Nov. 17-18, Nov. 22-25, Dec. 1-2, Dec. 8-9, and Dec. 15-16. (Ft. Leavenworth personnel only.)
- **Firearms Seasons Smoky Hill** – Nov. 20-Dec. 1.



—Shoup

CWD PLANS

KDWP plans to collect 3,200 samples to test for chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer and elk during the 2007-08 hunting season, including road kills. Those animals are more likely to test positive than those from a random collection of hunter-killed deer.

Deer killed on the highway are more likely to have CWD than the average deer because the disease affects the brain and causes the animal to be unaware of its surroundings. That doesn't mean that every deer hit on the highway has CWD. To date, none in Kansas have been positive for CWD, but not many have been tested.

KDWP is asking for help from the public in this effort. Anyone who hits a deer or sees a road-killed deer is asked to phone 620-342-0658.

Samples obtained from deer that are collected from taxidermists are valued for CWD testing because they tend to be from older bucks that have had more contacts with other potentially-infected deer.

CWD is a progressive, fatal disease in deer and elk that results in small holes developing in the brain. Decreased brain function causes the animal to display neurological symptoms such as depression, droopy head, staggering, loss of appetite, and a lack of response to man. The continuing deterioration of the brain leads to other symptoms such as

weight loss, drooling, and excessive thirst. Caution is advised because of unknown factors associated with any such "prion" disease although no human health risks have been discovered where CWD occurs.

Because CWD symptoms can resemble those of other diseases, the only way to accurately diagnose CWD is to collect and test the appropriate samples. For CWD testing in elk, KDWP collects the obex and the lymph nodes, but with deer, usually only lymph nodes are collected. Deer samples may be collected if the upper portion of the brain has been removed along with the antlers.

CWD has been detected twice in Kansas. The first case was in 2001 in a captive elk herd in Harper County. The other case of CWD was detected during the 2005-06 hunting season in a free-ranging whitetail doe harvested in Cheyenne County, bordering Colorado and Nebraska.

Nearly 3,000 animals were tested in Kansas last year and resulted in no new cases of CWD.

KDWP recommends the following guidelines for hunters and wildlife watchers:

- it is strongly recommended that hunters not transport carcasses into eastern Kansas from western Kansas or from states where CWD is endemic.
- dispose of carcasses properly: buried, composted, or in an approved landfill;

New QF Chapter

Last September, Ottawa County residents formed the state's seventh Quail Forever (QF) chapter, the Solomon Valley Chapter of QF. The chapter has targeted local quail habitat improvement and youth conservation education as its primary objectives.



Among other things, the group will be promoting Conservation Practice 33 (CP-33). Part of the federal Conservation Reserve Program commonly known as Bobwhite Buffers, CP-33 improves bobwhite quail habitat through the creation of habitat buffers along row crops. Kansas leads the nation with more than 27,000 acres enrolled.

Another key to the chapter's future habitat work will be connecting youth to hunting, conservation, and the outdoors.

For information on QF in Kansas, to start a chapter, or to join one of the state's existing chapters, phone Barth Crouch, QF regional wildlife biologist, at (785)823-0240 or email him at bcrouch@quailforever.org.

—Shoup

- don't train deer to congregate around bait piles; and
- alert local KDWP officials if you notice a deer that is acting abnormally or appears unhealthy.

This year, KDWP is able to offer payment to contractors to collect CWD samples, as well as to provide free CWD testing to hunters who present the head from their harvested deer or elk for testing. The test is a screening tool used for research purposes; it is not a test of food safety.

For more information about CWD, write the KDWP Research and Survey Office, 1830 Merchant, Emporia, KS, 66801 or phone 620-342-0658.

—Ruby Mosher, wildlife disease coordinator, Emporia

A Blood-curdling Affair



by Mark Shoup

Lots of city folks don't know much about wildlife, so when they encounter an unfamiliar critter in their own backyard, the results can be harrowing. My old buddy Winthrop is a big, burly, highly-educated man born and bred in New Jersey, but he is a city boy through-and-through. Smart as he is, he doesn't know a duck from a coot from a cormorant. Transplanted to Alabama by his company, life in the South has been an adventure for him.

Something of a fish out of water for awhile, he compounded the situation by falling in love with and marrying a southern gal born and bred in the 'Bama backwoods. Miss Carolyn (pronounced Karo-line) grew up hunting and fishing and could outshoot her older brothers by the time she was 10. Although petite, she can fillet a fish or gut a deer as well as any man. An odd match for the urbane Winthrop, you might think, but like opposite ends of a magnet, the attraction was as natural and undeniable as physics itself.

But there have been moments when Miss Carolyn's southern sense of humor have gotten the better of the gentle giant from Jersey.

One such adventure occurred on a warm night last summer when Winthrop was sitting on the back porch, minding his own business and enjoying his favorite \$20 cigar. As he describes it, "out of the shadows and onto the porch strolls a gigantic opossum. The creature crept toward me out of my far left periphery. I shouted in fear, just like a small child. I mean, this thing looked like one of those

Rats of Unusual Size from *The Princess Bride*, man!

"Reflexively, I rapped on the window pane – my Alex Graham Bell to my wife's Watson to 'Come quickly!' Of course, by the time she got there, the blasted beast had turned tail and exited stage left, out into the dark night."

Standing in the open sliding glass door, Miss Carolyn patiently asked Winthrop how big this "monster" was.

Still shaking with residual fear of the miserable beast, Winthrop blurted, "HUGE!"

Unimpressed, Miss Carolyn shrugged her shoulders, quietly slid the door shut, and disappeared into the darkened house. Winthrop's eyes darted furtively back toward the opossum's exit route then, forgetting that his wife had shut the door behind her, turned and stepped face-first into the heavy glass door. Blood streaming from his nose, he fell back on the patio swing, pinching his sizeable proboscis with both hands to stem the flow.

Meanwhile, Miss Carolyn was investigating. She grabbed a flashlight and stepped out the front door in time to spot Winthrop's tormentor, "a little bitty wormy 'possum," heading for the neighbor's shrubs. The prankish southern belle saw an opportunity that she just couldn't resist. Stifling giggles, she slipped back inside and grabbed a fuzzy-grey beanie baby elephant from a shelf. Then she tip-toed back outside and around the west of the house, wagging the flashlight all over the fence, so Winthrop would see her coming.

What Winthrop saw, through eyes still watering from the blow to his nose, was a flashlight beam casting about the back yard, over on the far left of the lawn. Hopefully, he thought, this was his wife, out in search of the very same critter he hoped never to see again.

Then the light went out. Silence. All of a sudden, out of the same shadows into which the dreaded Rat of Unusual Size had departed, Miss Carolyn came running onto the porch, shaking a brown furry object above her head. Panic-stricken, Winthrop felt his ticker freeze, mid-beat, and reached for his chest just at the moment she threw the harmless furry toy at her husband.

"He screamed like a girl," Miss Carolyn later recalled, "but then he clutched his chest and scared the liver outta me, too!"

As Miss Carolyn fell onto her bleeding, quivering husband, Winthrop grasped the Beanie Baby by the throat, shaking and choking it, then stopped, looked directly into his now confused wife's eyes, and grinned. They both rolled off the porch swing laughing like hysterical mental patients as somewhere down the street, the mangy opossum wandered into some else's back yard.

At last report, Winthrop was recovering from post-traumatic stress syndrome.

"I'm tellin' ya, Mark," he told me later, "she's after the insurance money."

CEDAR VALE ART WINNER

Justin Davis, of Cedar Vale, won the 2007 Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest in the Kansas 7th- through 9th-grade category with his depiction of a greenback cutthroat trout. For his achievement, Davis was honored at the Mall of America in Minneapolis, Minn., during the 9th Annual Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Expo July 21. Jason Holm, assistant regional director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, gave Davis a rod and reel, a gift certificate for art supplies from Cheap Joe's Art Stuff, a blue ribbon, and other special items.

Following the awards ceremony, winners and their families traveled to the Minnesota National Wildlife Refuge for a fishing trip.

Davis's achievements were also celebrated during a special ceremony on the playing field of the Metrodome before the Minnesota Twins on July 22 with the other 39 attending winning artists. His winning artwork was displayed on the big screen for the Sunday crowd. The winners and their families received free entry to the game compliments of the Twins.

In most years, the Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest encourages young artists nationwide to create an illustration of their state fish and a written composition on behavior, habitat, and efforts to conserve it. This year, participants could depict any fish they wanted. Entries are categorized by grade levels 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. As many as three winners are selected from each state and invited to Mall of America to be honored at the State-Fish Art Expo.

For information on the Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest, visit www.statefishart.com online, phone (763) 253-0222, or email jjones@wildlifeforever.org. Digital copies of winning artwork are available on request.

—Shoup

**Bass Management Plan**

Largemouth bass have a lot of fans in Kansas. In fact, recent surveys reveal that the largemouth bass is the most-sought species among resident and lifetime fishing license holders.

To accommodate that angler preference and to help ensure a rich bass fishing future in the Sunflower State, KDWP fisheries staff have finalized the Largemouth Bass Management Plan. To incorporate public input on the plan, a draft version has been circulated in recent months among interested anglers and conservation organizations.

"The purpose of the plan is to assist department staff in applying state-of-the-art fisheries science to future management of the species," said Doug Nygren, fisheries section chief for KDWP. "Another factor that led to development of the plan is the need to incorporate the experience and knowledge of KDWP fisheries staff who will be retiring in the next few years."

The plan explains how KDWP conducts bass population and assessment, how state hatcheries contribute to bass fishing opportunities, how harvest regulations help maintain high-quality fishing, discussion of challenges to the future of bass fishing in the state, and much more.

"We want to make sure that anglers have more background and more details on the many considerations we will take into account in future management decisions affecting the state's largemouth bass fishery," Nygren said.

To download the plan, type "Largemouth Bass Management Plan" in the search box at the KDWP website, www.kdwp.state.ks.us.

—Mathews

Don't Ignore Walleye

Kansas isn't known by outsiders as a state to produce great walleye fishing. The state record of 13 pounds, 2.56 ounces, doesn't compare with the world record of 25 pounds. But the informed know a secret worth sharing: Kansas may provide top walleye fishing throughout the year.

Any one of the state's 24 reservoirs can produce nice catches of walleye. Much of this success can be attributed to KDWP's aggressive walleye stocking program. Length limits allow walleye to grow to reproductive age, and in some reservoirs, prime habitat produces excellent walleye classes year after year. Glen Elder, Lovewell, Wilson, Marion, Cheney, El Dorado, and Hillsdale reservoirs are all good bets.

Kansas is also blessed with numerous state fishing lakes and more than 200 community lakes, many of which harbor walleye. These waters can be sleepers and don't attract the attention of larger impoundments.

Walleye fishing can be good any time of year, including fall and winter. If you've got the fishing itch at a time of year when most outdoorsmen and women are hunting, try your luck with Kansas walleye. Check the *2007 Fishing Forecast* for a lake near you. It could add an unusual flavor to the usual Thanksgiving dinner.

—Shoup

WET OR DRY, PLAYAS PRODUCTIVE

The recent discovery of a new species of spider on a playa lake in Briscoe County, Texas, underscores just how productive and important these ephemeral wetlands are. It also underscores how much biological diversity exists on playas in Kansas and throughout the High Plains, and how much may remain undiscovered.

The spider, named *Ceratinella playa*, is a 1.5 millimeter-long member of the Linyphiidae family. Researchers captured the species as part of a food web study of playas in Texas.

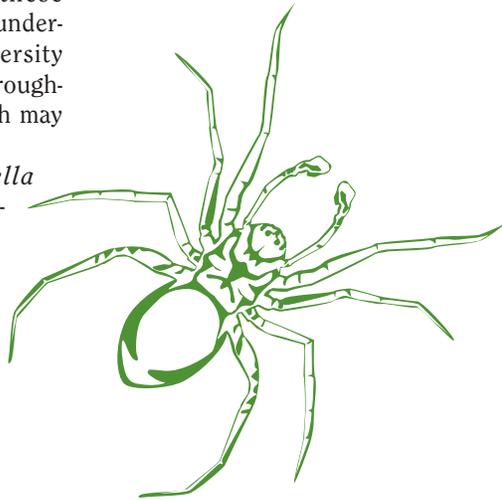
Although most people assume that a wetland is at its best when it is wet, playas require periods of drying out to produce food for wildlife and recharge the Ogallala Aquifer. These seasonal wet and dry cycles are what make them the most thriving ecological assets of the southern High Plains and western Great Plains.

The next time you are on a dry playa, scoop some soil from the basin and put it in a sealed glass jar. Take it home and add water. In a few weeks, tiny life forms – water fleas, fairy shrimp, and tadpole shrimp – will appear. The playa soil you collected could have been dry for months or years, but it is full of life nevertheless. This diversity of invertebrate and plant species would cease to exist if a playa was wet all the time. Some of wetland birds' favorite foods – smartweed, toads, and other treats – depend on the wet/dry cycle of playas for their survival.

If a playa were wet all the time, some of these species – such as smartweed, which requires periods of flooding and drying to germinate – would not grow at all. While others – such as spadefoot toads – would be eaten by predators before they had the chance to reproduce. Toads can lie dormant in dry playa basins for several years, basically taking refuge until the next storm hits. Playas may be dry for two years or more, but as soon as it starts raining,

amphibians show up.

The length of time a playa is wet or dry – its hydroperiod – is extremely



important to maintaining productivity. If a playa dries out too quickly, amphibians, water fleas, and other species can't reproduce. Sedimentation – the number one threat to playas – can cause them to dry out too quickly. Sedimentation occurs when rain or other runoff carries loose soils into playa basins, gradually filling them. This happens especially on playas in cropland. Sedimentation reduces the amount of water a playa can hold and spreads it out to a larger surface area, which increases water loss by evaporation. Playa researchers estimate that more than 50 percent of all playas have been effectively "fossilized" by sedimentation and have lost most wetland functions.

–Playa Post

REAL FOSSILS

While the term "fossilized" in the previous article is used metaphorically to describe the permanent ruin of a playa lake, fossilization is a real phenomenon of nature. In fact, without fossilization, we would know nothing about extinct animals that lived before written history.

When most people think of fossils, they think of dinosaurs – specifically, dinosaur "bones." However, what we see as the skeletons of ancient animals are not really bones; they are rocks. Rocks that come from living organisms under special conditions are called "fossils" – bones turned to stone.

Most fossils – particularly those of land animals – are rare because conditions have to be perfect for the fossilization process to occur. Usually, only hard living "tissue" can be preserved: teeth, claws, shells, bones. Fossils only occur in sedimentary rock – rock formed from sediment or from transported fragments deposited in water.

Once an animal dies, its soft tissue is eaten by other animals or rots away. If the bones left behind are near a river, and wind blows long enough to cover them with sand, the stage is set. Over the course of thousands of years, more and more sediment piles on top of the sand, burying the bones deeper under ground. Years later, if the river changes course or floods creating a lake, the bones and sediment are covered with water, and the minerals in the bones are slowly replaced with the minerals in the sand. Now under great pressure, the lower levels of sediment get pressed together to form sedimentary rock, bones and all.

After millions of years, no organic material is left in the bones. They are now solid rock, waiting for some intrepid paleontologist to expose them in a dig, perhaps revealing a species never known before.

–Shoup

Shooting Range Grants, Dec. 1 Deadline

According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, more than 19 million Americans enjoy target shooting, and more citizens are turning to the shooting sports as a leisure-time activity. Unfortunately, there are not nearly enough public shooting facilities in Kansas to meet the needs of recreational shooters, hunters, and hunter education classes. As firearms sales continue to increase, there is a growing need for new shooting ranges and enhancement of existing ranges.

In an effort to fill the need

for places to shoot, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) is accepting applications for grants to build or improve Kansas shooting ranges. The intent of this program is to assist individuals, educational institutions, gun clubs, local governments, and others to develop basic shooting ranges in areas of the state where the need for public shooting facilities is greatest.

This is a 75-percent reimbursement program. The applicant is expected to finance at least 25 percent of

the entire project with cash, donated materials, labor, or other approved in-kind match.

To apply, the Procedures Manual for Shooting Range Grant Application can be found online at www.kdwp.state.ks.us. Just type "shooting range grant" in the search box. Copies may also be requested by phoning 620-672-0748.

The deadline for applications is Dec. 1. No grants will be awarded before that date. Individuals or organizations



that submitted applications under the previous grant program will need to reapply.

—Ross Robins, Education Section chief, Pratt

Healthy Parks, Healthy Kids

A recent National Conference on Parks ended with a ground-breaking agreement targeted at improving the health of America's children.

The National Association of State Park Directors, under the leadership of newly elected President Greg Butts, director of Arkansas State Parks, and the National Park Service Leadership Council led by National Park Service Director Mary Bomar, signed a resolution pledging that state and national parks would work together to combat obesity, as well as reduce incidences of diabetes, attention disorders, and other mental and physical maladies resulting from a lack of outdoor exercise and contact with nature.

Jerry Hover, Kansas Parks Division director, called the agreement both historic and timely. "There is little doubt that many of the nation's youth prefer to spend time indoors watching TV and playing video games rather than getting the outdoor recreation and contact with nature that is so important to mental and physical health," Hover said.



Hover credited author Richard Louv, who wrote *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-deficit Disorder*, with sparking a national movement and being the driving force behind this healthy lifestyle movement.

Hover also credits U. S. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne and Bomar with driving home the importance of addressing this national health crisis during their conference presentations.

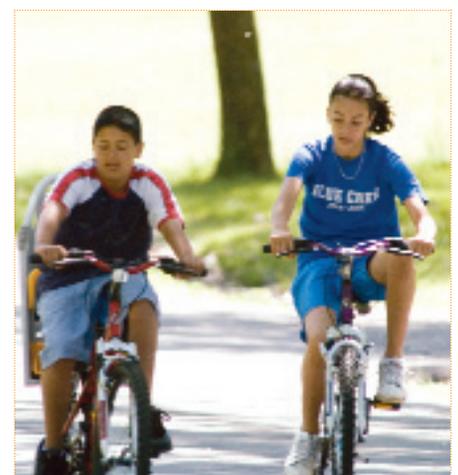
In his remarks at the conference, Kempthorne pledged to rally the federal agencies he oversees to work collaboratively with the states. "I hope we can reach a day when families and children move seamlessly from state parks to national parks, with doors open everywhere and pathways that lead from one program to another, from one life-changing and life-enriching experience to another," he said. "A day when children beg their parents to take them to a parks

as much – and maybe more – than they beg them to buy a new video game."

Bomar called the state and national parks the front line in the effort to reconnect children and their families to outdoor recreation and nature. The compact signed by the state and national park agencies recognizes that by working together, they can make a bigger impact.

For additional information, visit the National Association of State Park Directors website, www.naspd.org.

—National Association of State Park Directors release



by Mark Shoup



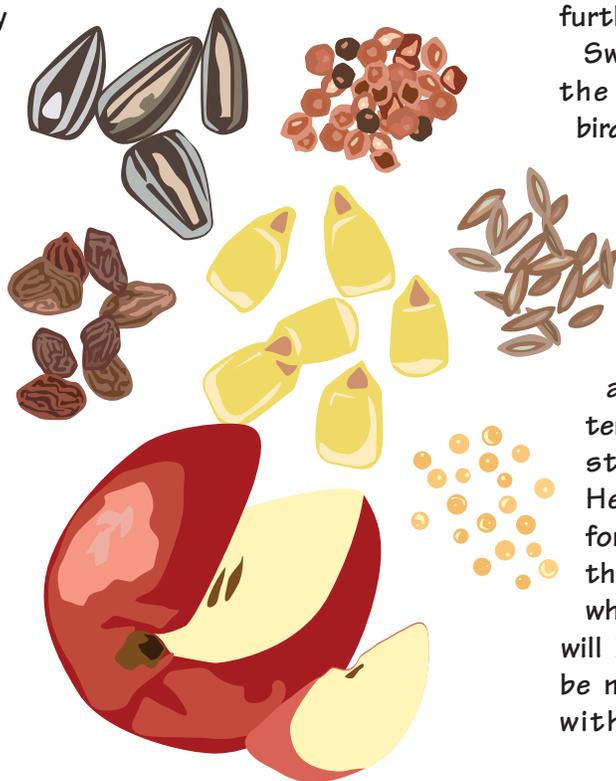
More and more people live in cities these days, but this doesn't mean their desire for experiences with wildlife disappears. Most people still love to watch wildlife, and the easiest way to attract wildlife is to feed them. Birds are the most popular wildlife to feed, and they're the quickest to respond to your efforts simply because they are both numerous and mobile. A few seeds and a little suet is all you need to start, and if you live near good habitat such as woods or brushy fields, you could lure a few birds the first day.

The numbers and kinds of mammals you attract also depends on the proximity of good habitat. If your yard has mature trees, you might soon find a squirrel rummaging through your bird feeder. Cottontails will set up housekeeping in weeds and bushes. Near dusk, they'll hop over to sample the table scraps spilled by the birds.

What you feed and how you feed it are also important. For example, birds that feed on the ground — such as towhees and mourning doves — won't be attracted to sunflower seeds hung from a feeder in a tree. Birds attracted to such a feeder, however, will scatter

enough feeder to attract ground-feeding birds. You can also scatter seed on a bare spot in your lawn. Once they begin foraging regularly, you can build a platform with raised edges to hold the seed a few inches off the ground. This will help keep seed out of the mud. A roof over the structure will further protect the feed.

Swinging feeders are fine for the more active tree-feeding birds, but most prefer a stable feeding station. An automatic hopper feeder that stores a gallon or more of feed and dispenses it as needed will become the focal point of feeding activity throughout the winter. It should be mounted on a sturdy post or tree branch. Heavy metal "T-posts" used for fencing are easy to drive in the ground and can be placed wherever viewing opportunities will be greatest. The feeder will be most effective when placed within a few feet of shrubs,





to a nail driven in a tree or post. When it comes to seed, it's hard to beat sunflowers, especially the solid black-oil seed. They're inexpensive, packed with protein, and relished by the more desirable songbirds. Starlings and house sparrows seldom take them, but house finches love them. Combine them with millet, another inexpensive grain, and you have a near-perfect mix. Both can be purchased at local grain elevators or farm supply stores in 40- or 50-pound bags.

Suet (animal fat) is an important winter food for insect-eating birds such as woodpeckers. Most farm supply stores carry ready-packed suet blocks and suet feeders, often mixed with seed. Suet can also be pressed it into holes bored in a log or placed in a wooden cage. These, as well as pre-made seed blocks in cages, attract plenty of woodpeckers and nuthatches.

Although not necessary, occasional raisins, apples, and other fruits will enhance your feeding operation. And remember: it may take a couple of weeks for birds to find your feeders, but when they do, they'll be constant visitors, especially when it's cold outside or there's snow on the ground. Just keep the feeders full.

Whatever your feeding setup, keep the operation clean. Periodically clear feeders and

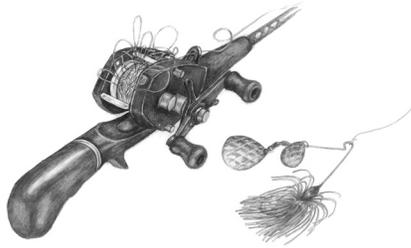
feeding areas of droppings, which can spread disease. Birds and other animals survived winter on the Great Plains long before man's arrival, so feeding is not necessary. Although it can help some individuals survive particularly harsh winters, the primary benefit lies in the pleasure it gives humans. It also increases our awareness and appreciation of nature, and this attitude enhancement may benefit wildlife in the long run.

This winter, try bird feeding as a new hobby. Be sure to set your feeder outside windows where you can see them easily and often. The kitchen window is one of the favorite spots because people are often near the kitchen sink. The living room is another good bet. Whatever your choice, you won't regret having taken up this fascinating hobby.



especially evergreens, but not so close that cats and other predators can lie in ambush.

Depending on your point of view and your pocketbook, squirrels can be joy or frustration. They help themselves to any bird feeder they can reach. If they disrupt your feeding operation, place a squirrel guard over the post just a few inches below the feeder. Commercial guards are available, but a garbage can lid or other metal disc balanced on a metal stop or clamp should do the trick. If you really enjoy watching squirrels but just want to keep them away from your bird feeder, stick an ear of corn



Backlash

by Mike Miller

MY AMERICAN TOP 40

The other night I was blissfully drifting through a state of semi-sleep as cool fall air drifted in through a cracked window — perfect for my intended destination: deep sleep. Then I realized slumber had slipped from my grip. I opened my eyes, blinking away the dark without success and wondered why I was awake. Then I knew. Geese!

I flipped back the covers, swung my legs out of bed, and tip-toed to the window, hoping not to wake my wife. The big black dog (BBD) lying at the foot of the bed raised his head and was trying to decide if this was important enough for him to follow. I pressed my ear to the open window and held my breath. Whitefronts. White-fronted geese have a sing-song, “giggling” call, and it is on my list of all-time greatest outdoor sounds. I smiled and inhaled the cool night air. The calls grew louder as the flock passed overhead against an inky, star-sprinkled sky, then faded. I listened for a following flock, but it was quiet. I tip-toed back over the BBD, who thump, thump, thumped his thick tail against the bed frame hoping, I’m sure, the noise would keep me from stepping on him. The geese confirmed what the cool night air had teased, autumn was upon us.

I lay back down, now wide awake, and wondered how something as faint as a far-away goose call could do what the blaring alarm buzzer sometimes failed. There are things about the outdoors — sounds, sights, smells — that push my buttons.

It’s kind of like hearing a song you liked when you were in high school. The familiar melody can cause a flood of memories. For me, the outdoors has its own “melodies.”

After a recent round of five-stand, I watched a good friend as he picked up his Federal paper hulls. I asked for one, and as I brought the empty hull to my nose, he smiled knowingly. There’s something about the smell of burnt powder in a paper shotgun hull. It brings back memories from my youth; hunting and trapshooting with my dad. It’s a good smell.

Coyotes yipping in the night is another sound that I have to stop and listen to — no matter where or when. I vividly remember staring wide-eyed into the dark on an overnight camping trip with my cousin when the coyotes sang not far away. It was a wild sound and a little intimidating to a couple of pre-teenagers who giggled nervously and pulled their sleeping bags up a little tighter. It’s a sound I love.

And there’s the sight of a sunrise. As the warm, yellow light floods over the horizon, feelings and memories wash over me. I remember my first pheasant hunt and the way the early sun colored the weedy wheat stubble that stretched in front of us. I feel the youthful anticipation. I remember dozens of mornings in the treestand when the sunrise brought longed-for warmth, as well as the anticipation of passing deer. Sunrise on the marsh with swarms of ducks silhouetted against the pink light on the eastern horizon is a part of every perfect duck hunt I’ve been on.

I guess this is the Casey Kasem’s American Top 40 of the outdoors. Like great songs, certain sounds, smells and sights never go out of style. They are timeless and our need to hear them, smell them and see them keeps us getting up early and getting outside. There is so much more to hunting and fishing than bagging birds or catching fish. It’s just that realizing and appreciating that takes some age and experience.

Here’s a few more of the all-time Top 40: the sound of a mallard drake’s quack on a foggy morning; the smell of marsh mud on waders; the flush of a largemouth bass hitting a topwater lure in the night; the subtle grunt of a rutting buck; the sight, and silence, of a sharpshin gliding through the branches; the “key-yuk” call of a bobwhite as a covey wakes before dawn; the screeching call of a cock pheasant flushing; a turkey gobble on a calm spring morning; and there are so many more. ♡



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