

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

MAY/JUNE 2008

\$2.75





On Point

by Mike Hayden



The Cabin Experience

Whatever your outdoor passions, KDWP cabins can make them more enjoyable. A new outdoor experience is waiting for you in one of more than 50 rental cabins, most of which are located within state parks. There are cabins that provide all the comforts of home, as well as those that give you a more rustic experience.

It all started in 1993 when innovative park managers enclosed covered picnic shelters. These cabins had no running water or electricity but were close to shower houses and proved to be popular.

In 1997, the Friends of El Dorado State Park obtained a low-cost loan and erected five primitive cabins there. Throughout the last 10 years, various parks around the state have proven remarkably resourceful in finding funding to build modern cabins.

Cabins at Tuttle Creek, Cross Timbers and Perry state parks are among those constructed with the help of The Kansas Wildscape Foundation, a non-profit conservation and outdoor recreation organization. Wildscape borrowed the money needed to build cabins, and the cabin rental receipts are used to pay off the note. A cooperative agreement with the Kansas Department of Corrections uses an inmate-training program to build many of the newer cabins.

And now cabins are being added at select state fishing lakes and wildlife areas. A cabin at Ottawa State Fishing Lake in Saline County offers a pristine setting with plenty of solitude. This cabin has been popular with anglers. However, cabins on wildlife areas, as well as in state parks, make great base camps for hunters. Many cabins have heating/air conditioning, running water, full kitchen, bathrooms, outdoor cooking grills, and beds to sleep anywhere from two to eight, depending on the cabin. Fall and spring might be the best times to enjoy the lakes, parks, and wildlife areas because the busy crowds of summer are long gone.

A new cabin in the Mined Land Wildlife Area in Cherokee County provides a great retreat. Set atop a

bluff overlooking a large wildlife area strip mine lake, the view from this cabin is worth a night's rent. Outside your cabin door wait hunting, hiking, wildlife watching, and fishing opportunities. This cabin sits on the shoreline of the Mined Land Area's Trout Lake. Rainbow and brown trout stocked in the lake survive year-round due to the deep, cool water. Imagine peacefully casting a flyrod from your belly-boat while turkeys gobble in the nearby woods. What a dilemma: catch trout or hunt turkeys.

For convenience, we are developing a system that will let you make reservations through our website. Until that internet system is in place, you simply call the park or nearest wildlife area office to make a reservation. And you should. Cabins are becoming so popular that they are full most weekends, and many weekdays through the summer.

Cedar Bluff, Cheney, Crawford, Cross Timbers, Eisenhower, El Dorado, Kanopolis, Lovewell, Milford, Perry, Pomona, Prairie Dog, Tuttle Creek, Webster, and Wilson state parks have cabins for rent. Cabins are scheduled for construction at Fall River, Glen Elder, and Hillsdale state parks. And don't forget the cabins at Ottawa State Fishing Lake and the Mined Land Wildlife Area.

Nightly rental fees range from \$30 to \$110 and are set with consideration given to local lodging prices, amenities provided, cabin size, and time of year. Many cabins offer bargain prices during the off-season or during weeknights. And there are options of renting them for the week or even a month.

Kansas state parks and wildlife areas are truly outdoor treasures, and the cabins make these areas more accessible. Whether you're looking for a quiet hunting camp or a lively family reunion, KDWP cabins can enhance your outdoor fun. Check our website, call your local KDWP office, or visit the nearest state park office and learn more about our cabins. Your best outdoor experiences lie ahead.

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

May/June 2008

Vol. 65, No. 3

- 1 On Point**
The Cabin Experience *by Mike Hayden*
- 16 There's a New Ferret In Town**
The black-footed ferret, once thought to be extinct, is making a comeback thanks to a captive breeding program. Last fall, 24 ferrets were released in prairie dog towns in northwest Kansas. *by Dan Mulhern*
- 22 New Home For Swiftly**
Although numbers dropped dangerously low in the 1950s, swift foxes have thrived in northwest Kansas in recent years. Some of these foxes are now being released in South Dakota. *by Matt Peek*
- 29 Star Of The Cast**
Osa Johnson was famous through safari movies shot by her husband Martin. However, Osa was also an accomplished angler and found a way to fish wherever they traveled. *by J. Mark Shoup*
- 35 Why Do We Have Different Length And Creel Limits?**
Regulations governing length and creel limits on sport fish can be difficult to keep straight, but they're worth it. All harvest restrictions are established to improve angling opportunities. *by Mike Miller*
- 38 Redneck Surf-N-Turf**
The author struggles with his identity but is finally out of the redneck closet through his affinity for hunting squirrels, catching catfish, and considering the resulting meal fine cuisine. *by Marc Murrell*
- 42 Angling In The City**
The Urban Fishing Program is designed to provide quality angling opportunities close to home for urban anglers. *by Jessica Mounts*
- 45 Backlash**
Heroes Needed *by Mike Miller*



16

GOVERNOR

Kathleen Sebelius

COMMISSIONERS

Kelly Johnston, Chairman, *Wichita*
Shari L. Wilson, Vice Chairman, *Kansas City*
Doug Sebelius, *Norton*
Frank A. Meyer, *Herington*
Gerald Lauber, *Topeka*
Robert Wilson, *Pittsburg*
Debra Bolton, *Garden City*

ADMINISTRATION

Secretary Mike Hayden
Ass't. Secretary/Admin. Richard Koerth
Ass't. Secretary/Operations Keith Sexson
Director of Administrative Svcs. Cindy Livingston
Director of Fisheries & Wildlife Joe Kramer
Director of Parks Jerold (Jerry) Hover
Director of Law Enforcement Kevin Jones

MAGAZINE STAFF

Chief of Information and Education
Bob Mathews
Editor Mike Miller
Associate Editor J. Mark Shoup
Photographer/Associate Editor Mike Blair
Illustrator Dustin Teasley
Staff Writer Marc Murrell
Circulation Teri Simpson

KANSAS WILDLIFE & PARKS (ISSN 0898-6975) is published bimonthly (every other month) by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612. Address editorial correspondence to Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124 (620) 672-5911. Send subscription requests to Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine, P.O. Box 8059, Red Oak, IA 51591. Subscription rate: one year \$10; two years \$18; and three years \$27. Articles in the magazine may be reprinted with permission. Periodical postage paid at Pratt, KS and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine, P.O. Box 8059, Red Oak, IA 51591. For subscription inquiries call toll-free 1 800 288-8387.



29



Front Cover: This American avocet was photographed at the Quivera National Wildlife Refuge by Mike Blair. 600mm lens, f/11 @1/500 sec.
Back Cover: Brandon Murrell poses with his tom taken during the 2008 youth turkey season. His father Marc shot the photo with a 18-55mm lens, f/11 @1/250th sec.



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

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or handicap. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612.

Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks Website
www.kdwp.state.ks.us
magazine e-mail — mikegm@wp.state.ks.us



Editor:

Virtually everything printed in your magazine is propaganda, that is, it is biased reporting. Nothing wrong with that. I think most readers and subscribers understand that and accept it as part of your stated mission. It is a disservice, however, when you pick up stuff from outside sources without identifying the source's agenda – and they all have one. For instance, the piece you did on PETA in the March/April issue was attributed to "Center for Consumer Freedom." Who is that? Who funds that group? What is their agenda? I found it interesting you would print this propaganda but make no mention of the recent video released to CBS News concerning the brutal treatment of animals at the California slaughter house. Are you so prejudiced and blindered that you can see no good coming from compassionate animal groups, even if you consider them to be generally wrong-headed when it comes to hunting or trapping? A little self-reflection by sportsmen would go a long way here. Check that post in your own eye before damning the mote in others'.

The other piece I question was titled, "Power Plant Confusion." Yes, energy generation is indeed a complicated issue. But again, you attributed the article to "Playa Lakes Joint Venture." Who are they? Who funds them? What is their primary agenda? I am an ardent supporter of wildlife habitat and have been for decades, but trading habitat today (even if it's 30,000 acres) for 11 million more tons of carbon dioxide per year in the atmosphere seems a myopic trade-off at best. I wonder how our grandchildren and great-grandchildren might view that wonderful deal offered by Sunflower Electric? I read a fair amount of science news, and have since the early 1980s, and I've yet to come across a climatologist not funded by oil revenue who disputes the cataclysmic effects portent in the anthropogenic production of more carbon dioxide. Most of the currently exhibited symptoms of environmental stress and disjunction were easily extrapolated back in the '80s and '90s from data already available. It's old news by the

HUNTING HERITAGE *with Wayne Doyle*

2007 Kansas Hunting Incident Report

A hunting incident is defined as the discharge of a firearm or bow while hunting that causes injury or death to a human. These used to be called "hunting accidents," but the word "accident" sometimes seemed to blame the victim for being shot. "Incident" more accurately defines the event.

During 2007, there were 19 hunting incidents, including one that was fatal. Every one of these incidents was preventable. At the same time, there were an estimated 2.5 million hunting days in Kansas. Hunting is safe and getting safer because of the efforts of the volunteer Hunter Education Program instructors who have introduced almost a half-million new hunters to the safe and responsible methods of hunting.

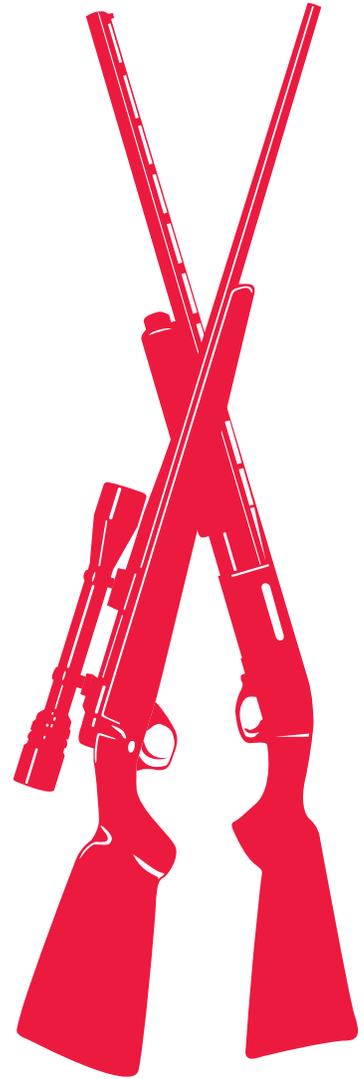
Of the 19 accidents, 11 of them involved one hunter swinging on game and hitting another hunter with shot. Ten of these involved victims and shooters in the same hunting party. These could have been easily avoided if the shooter had followed one rule: **Be certain of your target and what lies beyond it.**

The second most common incident (6) involved careless handling of a firearm. Half of these were self-inflicted. All could have been avoided by always controlling the muzzle of the gun, including not pointing it at yourself or resting the muzzle on your foot while taking a break. It will surprise no one that alcohol figured into two of the careless handling incidents.

One incident involved the shooter failing to properly identify his target. While walking up turkeys after "a beer or two," the shooter mistook another hunter for a turkey, causing serious wounds. **Be certain of your target.**

The fatal incident can not be officially classified until legal proceedings are complete, but involved a young man hunting geese in a field from a layout blind. A shot was fired from the nearby road striking the young man in the chest and killing him instantly. **Be certain of your target and what lies beyond it.**

Not one of these incidents had to happen. Once the shot is fired, it can not be called back. Think before you shoot. Help make Kansas an even safer place to hunt.



Letter Continued . . .

time it hits the mainstream media. There are of course variations in the level of confidence in predictions for locales, and for the scale and degree of disruption to various habitats. I have seen no credible predictions that would make 30,000 acres of wildlife habitat a wise trade-off for further carbon dioxide releases of such a massive scale for the indefinite future. The alternative sources of energy are problematic and contentious, to be sure, but they deserve a much more even-handed look than the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (whoever they are) would have us believe.

Economics and politics make for strange bedfellows.

*Randy Winter
Manhattan*

Mr. Winter,

You are absolutely correct in your assertion that nearly every source of information has an agenda. Unfortunately, those agendas are not always evident. However, PETA's agenda is evident and contrary to our agency's mission. I'm not sure CCF's agenda is an issue if the story is accurate, but I agree that we must be careful of the sources we use.

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) is a partnership of federal and state wildlife agencies, conservation groups, private industry and landowners dedicated to conserving bird habitats in the Southern Great Plains. This organization produces "propaganda" about the value of playa wetlands in the Great Plains, including western Kansas, not only for their importance to migrating birds, but also for their value in replenishing the aquifer. The article only pointed out the "quandary." Kansans who love the prairie were thrilled at the prospect of returning so many acres of irrigated croplands to native prairie, at least initially. As with any political, economic or environmental issue, the more we know about all sides, the better decisions we can make.

editor



BIRD BRAIN with Mike Rader

The American Avocet

The American avocet is a common and recognizable shorebird. It has a long, upturned bill, long bluish-gray legs, and a bold black and white wing pattern. In spring and summer, the head and upper chest are rusty-orange, changing to white and gray in the fall and winter. The avocet is a relatively large shorebird, standing 17-19 inches tall, with a wingspan of approximately 28 inches and weighing around 9-12 ounces.

As they migrate through Kansas, avocets stop to rest and feed at a variety of wetland settings. Highest abundance occurs on the playa lakes region in the western half of the state and the large marshes of Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in central Kansas. Most migrate through in April and May, but a good number will stay and nest in Kansas. This species will nest as far north as central Canada, and southward through Montana, the Dakotas, New Mexico, and the Texas Panhandle. Birds in fall migration are usually through Kansas by the third week of October, with a few birds lingering later in milder years. Most American avocets winter in California, Mexico and along the U.S. Gulf Coast, from Texas to North Carolina.

An avocet nest is very simple, consisting of a scrape in the soil or sand, sometimes lined with grass, feathers, small rocks, or completely unlined. Clutch size is usually four eggs, which are greenish-brown with irregular brown-black spots. They are pointed on one end, keeping them from rolling away from the nest site. Females may lay eggs in the nests of other females or even the nests of black-necked stilts, terns or gulls.

Avocets are fierce protectors of their nest and young, often flying at the source of disturbance, calling loudly, and even striking the intruder. An interesting aspect of their response to predators is that sometimes avocets start a series of calls that change pitch, simulating the Doppler Effect, making the birds' approach seem faster and more aggressive than actually is. The chicks leave the nest within 24 hours of hatching and can walk, swim, or dive to escape predators.

American avocets feed by sweeping their bills side-to-side through the mud, catching the small aquatic invertebrates stirred up by their feet. Though they have long, gangly legs and feet are without webs, they are good swimmers.

Avocets and their cousin, the black-necked stilt, are easy to see and identify. With practice, the other shorebird species that associate with them will become easier to identify as well.

Letter . . .

Editor,

Proponents of using the .223 cartridge for deer hunting should consider the thoughts of John Nosler, a renowned hunter and founder of Nosler bullets. In an article by Nosler in "Nosler Reloading Manual No. 3" he lays out his experience hunting with a .225 Winchester at the Oregon Game Commission's request in the 1960s. His conclusion was that even with heavier, tougher bullets, the .22 centerfires were not suitable for deer, even at close range.

It is my understanding from reloading manuals that the .225 of the 1960s gave better terminal ballistics than today's .223/5.56 cartridge.

*Harlon Hobbs
Phillipsburg*

Mr. Hobbs,
You'll be glad to know that the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission amended the recommendation to read ". . . a bullet larger than .23 inches in diameter . . ." before passing the big game equipment regulation. They did approve changes to allow scopes on muzzleloaders, crossbows during the firearm season and broadheads that are made of material other than metal.

editor

IT'S THE LAW

with Kevin Jones

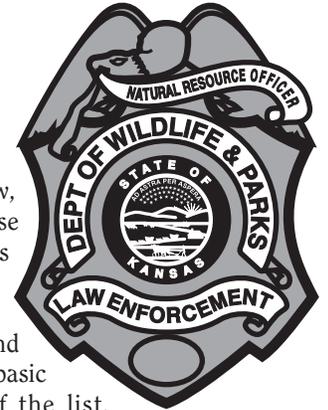
Safe Fun On The Water

If you enjoy fishing, water skiing or just floating along in a canoe, you'll probably agree that it's been a long winter. But it's over now, and it's time to get equipment in order because boating can be one of the more pleasurable ways of enjoying the water and sun.

Regardless of your reason for being on the water, one thing holds true for everyone. First and foremost, you are a boater, and therefore, some basic rules apply. Safety is certainly at the top of the list. Nothing can ruin an outing like an accident or injury. Unfortunately, sometimes accidents go beyond injury and result in the loss of life.

One thing that can go a long way toward keeping everyone safe is the use of personal floatation devices (PFDs), or life jackets. Not only are they required of boaters by law, they can save your life.

Each boating season, department officers conduct vessel safety inspections in an effort to inform and educate boaters on safe boat operations. Of all the safety-related equipment required for boating, the largest problem area is PFDs. During the 2007 boating season, officers documented that 28 percent of the vessels inspected either did not have enough PFDs on board or had PFDs that were inaccessible. The law requires that there must be a properly-sized PFD for each person on board, and it must be readily accessible. Readily accessible means that it cannot be stowed in a compartment or inside packaging material, but it must be in open view and immediately available for use. It should also be noted that children 12 years of age or younger, must wear a properly-sized PFD while on board or being towed by a vessel.

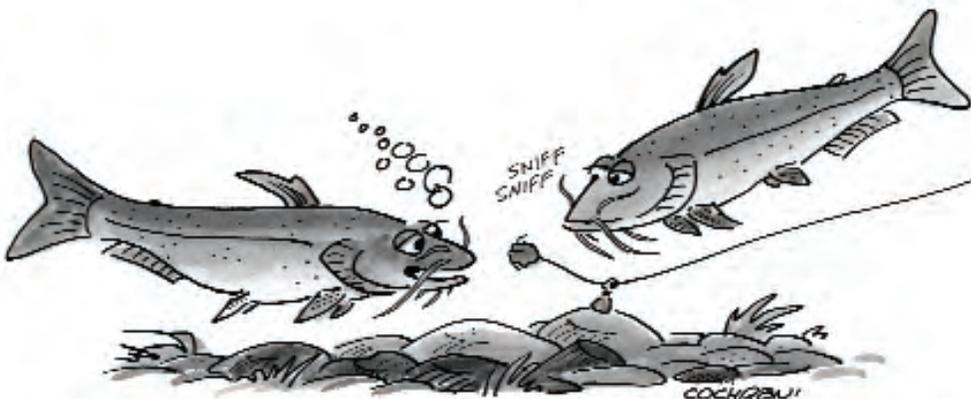


In an effort to emphasize the importance of this safety issue, department officers will be focusing on PFD regulations this boating season. As with other safety awareness programs, the intent is to increase the use of these life-saving devices to help ensure that everyone has a pleasurable time on the water.

For more information relating to boating safety, contact either the Law Enforcement Division or the Boating Education Section: 620-672-5911 or log on to www.kdwp.state.ks.us.

WAY outside

BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY CALL IT 'STINK BAIT'. IT SMELLS GREAT TO ME."

Letter . . .

Editor,

That deer on Page 24 of your January/February issue may have some white hair on the under side of his tail, but that doesn't make that mule deer a white tail buck!!

Philip Roe
Buena Vista, CO

Deer Mr. Roe,

I've made plenty of mistakes during my tenure as editor, and I'll surely make more. But we'll have to agree to disagree about the deer on Page 24 of our 2008 photo issue. Looking at the confirmation of the antlers, our experts are 99.9 percent sure it's a white-tailed deer.

editor



Have you ever gotten confused when navigating a website? Perhaps even the KDWP website can be confusing at times. (Surely not!) One handy feature of any good website is a link called "Site Map." This appears on the home page of a website – usually at the bottom of the page, as it does on the KDWP site – and provides a quick glimpse of what the site has to offer. If the Site Map is doing its job, it will provide unfamiliar users a quick way to find what's there and how to get to it.

KDWP's Site Map reveals many useful topics and subtopics at a glance. It

DIGITAL IMAGE with Mike Blair

Share Your Photos on KDWP Galleries



Kansas has diverse natural beauty enjoyed by residents and nonresidents alike. With the increasing use of digital cameras and cell-phone photo technology, rare outdoors moments are easier than ever to capture and share. Public galleries on the KDWP website are designed with this in mind.

Galleries are divided into general topics, including wildlife, state parks, boating, fishing, and hunting. Currently, the galleries are designed to hold the 50 most recent photos in each category. New photos displace old ones as they arrive.

To have the best chance for posting, photos should be interesting, well-composed, and tell a story. Additionally, they should be sized 4 inches by 6 inches at 72 dpi and submitted electronically to photos@wp.state.ks.us as jpeg images. Image title, date taken, photographer's name, and location of image must be included for each submission.

Images must depict outdoor Kansas and must be appropriate for display on the KDWP website. No zoo, livestock, or domestic animal shots will be accepted. More submission information is available on the KDWP website at kdwp.state.ks.us

This year, the best gallery images will be considered for use in the January-February 2009 photo issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine. For selected photos, photographers will be contacted for high-resolution versions for further screening and possible use in print media. Be sure and set your cameras on the highest resolution settings when shooting scenes for possible magazine usage.

On The Web with Mark Shoup

Site negotiation

shows how topics are nested and provides quick clicks to get to many areas without having to go through several pages.

For example, did you ever wonder why you must provide your Social Security Number when purchasing licenses or permits? An easy answer can be found at the bottom of the Site Map page. Just click "Site Map" at the bottom of the KDWP home page, and under "License/Permit Sales" at the bottom of the Site Map, there's a link entitled "About Social Security Number." Click that, and you have your answer.

Of course, many topics may be directly reached by typing the proper word or phrase in the search box on our home page, but unless you get just the right words, you may get more choices than you want from your

search. The Site Map gives a quick and simple glimpse of the many topics covered.

With approximately 10,000 pages on the KDWP website, you can see why shortcuts such as the Site Map may come in handy.

COUGAR TRACKS

On an unrelated internet topic, for all you cougar "hunters" out there, here's a handy site for properly identifying cougar tracks: www.cougarsanctuary.org/tracks.html. It not only shows how to make a plaster cast of a print but how to pattern the arrangement of paw pads to distinguish a cougar track from a dog track, even if claw prints are absent.

THAT'S WILD
with Ken Brunson



Non-endangered Species

The removal of the bald eagle from the federal Threatened and Endangered Species List last August was a milestone for species recovery efforts. If ever there was a species to give special attention, it was our national symbol.

There is plenty of good news about species recovery programs. Recently, black-footed ferrets have been re-introduced to Kansas after their disappearance nearly five decades ago. For an animal thought to be extinct just more than 20 years ago, this is the wildlife management equivalent of a miracle.

In its eighth year, the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program is designed to continue this success and to prevent species from becoming endangered in the first place. SWG is driven by a long-term plan, "A Future for Kansas Wildlife." (See it on the KDWP website.) The mantra is to "keep common species common." This is a comprehensive wildlife conservation plan similar to plans other states developed in order to implement SWG, which currently offers nearly \$1 million a year to Kansas. There are 315 animal species identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in this plan, including those on the Kansas list of threatened and endangered species, as well as those that need to be monitored. Annual funding of the SWG program allows special research and management efforts to be directed at species included in the plan.

As might be expected, there are certain groups of animals which seem to be more at risk than others. Here is a breakdown by general groupings of which ones are represented in the plan. They are ranked by the percentage of total species in that group that made it into "A Future for Kansas Wildlife" plan as a SGCN species. The ranking of some of these groups may surprise you.

Certainly, aquatic species seem to be under more threat than terrestrial ones, even though we seem to hear a lot more about some of the more charismatic furry and feathered ones – such as ferrets and eagles. Crayfish were number one in the rankings in large part because there simply is little known about that whole class of crustaceans in Kansas.

Group	Total Species in Group	Percent % of Species Included as SGCN
Crayfish	10	100%
Mussels	45	96%
Amphibians	30	56%
Fish	144	47%
Reptiles	53	47%
Mammals	89	24%
Birds	468	21%
Others with lower percentages include insects, worms and snails.		

PARK VIEW



with Kathy Pritchett

State Parks Provide Family Value

Today's parents face an alarming statistic: their children may not live as long as they will. For the first time in history, life expectancy for Americans has declined. Humans today live a lifestyle far removed from what was the norm less than a century ago. Today's children (and their parents) often go from school to car to home without ever touching unpaved earth. While various reasons have been postulated for this



decline, Kansas has 25 gems that can help to reverse this trend – Kansas state parks.

In *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv theorizes that "a growing body of research links our mental, physical and spiritual health directly to our association with nature." Getting outdoors can not only improve our physical health by allowing us to exercise, exposure to nature can improve our outlook on life. Recent research also shows that playing outside in dirt can strengthen a child's immune system. Our state parks offer 35,000 land and 25,000 water acres for recreation. Nearly 500 miles of trails run through these areas.

Kids can frolic on beaches, dig in sand, swim in lakes, play on playgrounds, hike on trails, play disc golf, sit in the shade, or just play in the dirt. Parents or grandparents can sit and watch kids play on beaches or playgrounds, or get active with them by hiking a trail, flying a kite, catching a fish, or just chasing a butterfly.

By attending special events

sponsored by state park staff, kids can learn about Kansas wildlife, from snakes to raptors, and Kansas history, through mountain man rendezvous reenactments. Events also encompass offbeat activities, such as Christmas in July, music festivals, and barbecue cookoffs. Coming this summer are: free entrance days and OK Kids Days at many state parks, competitive trail rides at Hillsdale, a fun run at Glen Elder, Fourth of July fireworks celebrations at most parks, Toronto Fun Days, and the world-(or at least locally-) famous Lovell Sand Castle Contest.

In short, there is plenty to see and do in Kansas state parks. You can get more information about state park events by calling the park office near you or by going to the KDWP website and clicking on "Parks." This coming weekend, or right now, would be a perfect time to get outdoors and do something healthy for yourself and your family. Visit a Kansas state park!



The Perfect Fish Batter

There are many mixes on the market for dipping and frying fish. After trying several and not quite getting what I wanted, I decided to make my own. With a little practice, I developed what I feel is a great mix, using ingredients common even in rural grocery stores.

When I make a batch of mix, I make enough to last a few months and freeze what I don't use. The flour I use, Western Star Seasoned Flour, is milled in Salina and comes in 3-pound bags. I usually use a whole bag for a batch but keep another handy in case I get carried away with the seasonings. I then use a seasoning called Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning.

When making a batch of mix, have a

pan of hot grease ready to test the mix. Using a small can of Creole, pour 1/3 of the can into a gallon ziplock bag with the bag of flour. Close and mix well. With a little water on your fingers, get some mix and roll into a little ball about the size of a pea. Drop into the hot grease. After 30 seconds, pull the dough ball, cool, and taste. Add more seasoning or flour to adjust to specific tastes. Too much seasoning will cause food to taste oversalted. If it tastes almost there on salt, stop, it will have plenty.

Filletts should be wet with water or milk before dipping. Using buttermilk, eggs, or double dipping to get thicker crust will increase the salty flavor and oil saturation. Also, it is common to over-



cook fish in new oil because it doesn't brown well. Add a little butter to your cool frying grease to help brown those first few fillets. Place freshly fried foods on a cooling rack, not paper towels. Paper towels will soak only part of the grease from the food, holding the rest against the food to soak back in after it cools. This mix and technique is great on fish, frog legs, even fried chicken.



FISHIN' with Mike Miller

When To Fish?

There's been lots of debate over the years about when the fish bite best. You can consult solunar tables, time the spawn, or concentrate your fishing at a time of year when fish are naturally feeding heavily. Some of the techniques can get complicated: following moon phases, barometric pressures, wind direction, water temperatures, or even waiting for elm leaves to grow to the size of squirrel ears. Most of us can't drop what we're doing and go fishing when everything is right, and that's why we've all heard the age-old excuse, "You should have been here yesterday."

But there are a couple of rules that are easy to follow and will increase your odds on any trip. First, fish are easier to catch when they are in relatively shallow water. And there are two things that bring them into shallow water: spawning and feeding. Most of our game fish spawn in the spring, and water temperatures are most conducive to shallow-water fishing in spring.

Let's narrow it down even more. The department has

conducted the Master Angler program since 1981. Anglers submit applications for award certificates when they catch fish that are as long or longer than established minimum lengths. If we look at all species, applications for awards for fish caught in April and May make up nearly half. Other top months include June, July, August and September, but they are significantly below April and May.

The year 2006 was a pretty good one for fishing, according to Master Angler Awards; more than 200 applications were submitted. May was the top month, accounting for 27 percent of all fish caught. April was second with 15 percent, and July and June followed closely with 14 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

If we look at the best months for some of the more popular species, such as crappie, largemouth bass, white bass, and walleye, April and May still come out on top. June was a good month for walleye, too.

Of course there are many variables that could influence these findings. Weather and the number of people fishing are probably two of the most significant. But let's look at when our state record fish were caught for a little more confirmation. May is the winner with 13 state records. June follows with 9, July is third with five and four entries were caught in April. Three records were caught in November. March and August accounted for two each, while August, September, and October each accounted for one record fish.

The best time to go fishing is whenever you can, but your odds of catching fish are best in May, followed closely by April and June.

LOOK BACK

with Bob Mathews

Kanopolis To Kaw River: Kansas State Parks

Fifty years ago, the Kansas Park and Resources Authority (KPRA) entered a long-term lease agreement with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers for 800 acres of land adjacent to the 3,500-acre Kanopolis Reservoir – the first Corps lake in Kansas. Signing of that lease launched development of Kanopolis State Park, the original state park developed by the fledgling KPRA.

“We didn’t have a hammer or a screwdriver when we went to Kanopolis that first day,” recalls Verne Hart, now retired and living in Manhattan. Hart, Kansas’ first state park manager, was hired the same day as Lynn Burris, who was appointed director of the KPRA. Campsites, picnic shelters, and restroom facilities were the first Kanopolis State Park facilities

constructed in 1958. The San-Ore Construction Company of McPherson donated equipment to build interior roads in the park.

Kanopolis State Park has come a long way in its 50 years. Today, the park features a full-service marina, beaches, picnic areas, and cabins, as well as trails for horseback riding, mountain biking, and hiking. More than 200 primitive campsites and 119 utility sites are located through the 14 campgrounds in the Langley Point and Horsethief areas. Kanopolis offers 25 miles of trails, all of which start in the state park.

The Kansas state park system has come a long way, as well. Associated with the boom in federal reservoir construction in the state, 16 more state parks were devel-

oped during the 1960s. Today, 24 state parks and the Prairie Spirit Rail Trail are operated by KDWP’s Parks Division. (NOTE: In 1987, Gov. Mike Hayden’s executive order combined the Kansas Park and Resources Authority and the Kansas Fish and Game Commission to create the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.) The newest state park – Kaw River State Park on the outskirts of Topeka – was authorized by the 2004 Kansas Legislature, and is now under development.

Rick Martin, has served as Kanopolis State Park manager for 30 years. He’s seen a variety of improvements, while at the same time getting acquainted with successive generations of the original visitors to Kanopolis.

“Many of the most important improvements here go unnoticed because they aren’t readily seen, such as updating of water, sewer, and electrical utilities in the campgrounds,” he said. Interior park roads, which were originally gravel,

have been overlaid with asphalt. Open air showers have been replaced with modern shower/restroom facilities. Boat ramps and courtesy docks have been added. An extensive trail system hosts a rapidly growing level of hiking, bicycling and equestrian use. The addition of cabins at Kanopolis and other state parks has been an extremely popular addition, too.

“I’m amazed how popular our cabins are,” Martin says. “Every weekend from January through August is now booked, and weekdays during the summer are starting to fill up.”

Those original visionaries that started the state park system 50 years ago would be pleased at the growth and development of Kansas state parks. They also would take pride in the fact that they’ve helped hundreds of thousands of Kansans discover the state’s compelling natural environments, from the hardwood forests of the east to the wide open grasslands of the west, by giving them a place to play.

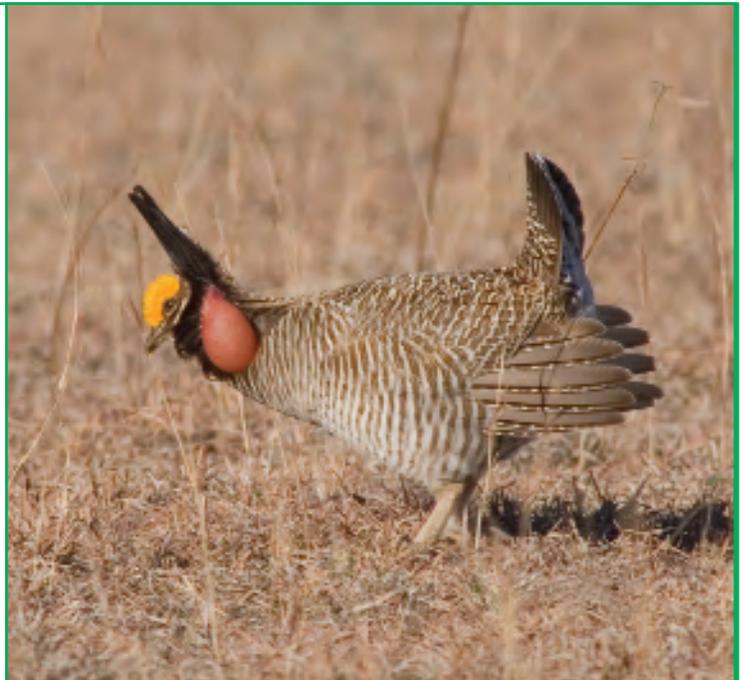
\$11 MILLION FOR CONSERVATION

Under the 2008 Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration programs, Kansas will receive nearly \$5.5 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education projects and more than \$5.5 for sport fish restoration in the Sunflower state. These funds pay up to 75 percent of the cost of each eligible project, and the states are required to contribute at least 25 percent.

Funds will be used to manage wildlife, conduct habitat research, carry out studies and surveys, acquire lands for wildlife as well as public access, conduct hunter education programs, and maintain shooting ranges.

For additional information concerning these two important fish and wildlife conservation programs and a comprehensive list of state-by-state funding allocations, visit the following website: <http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov>.

—KDWP news



TIAHRT HONORED

Representative Todd Tiahart (R-KS) was recently presented with an award for leadership in championing federal funding for state-based wildlife conservation under the State Wildlife Grants Program (SWG). The award recognizes his participation in SWG, which remains the nation's core program for preventing wildlife from becoming endangered. The award was presented by Teaming with Wildlife, a national coalition of more than 5,000 conservation-minded organizations and businesses working to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered.

The SWG Program provides federal money to every state and territory for cost-effective conservation aimed at preventing wildlife from becoming endangered. Funds appropriated under the SWG Program are allocated to every state according to a formula based on each state's size and population.

To learn more about the Teaming with

Wildlife Coalition, go online to www.teaming.com. An article on the SWG program from Kansas Wildlife & Parks magazine may also be found on this page.

—KDWP news

KANSAS LION

KDWP officers are investigating the alleged killing of a mountain lion in southcentral Kansas last fall. A Barber County landowner had reportedly killed the cougar on his property last November, when, while cutting wood, he noticed the cat in some tall grass nearby, retrieved a firearm from his truck, and shot the animal.

Investigators took possession of the lion's pelt and hope to obtain the skull. The animal had been provided to a taxidermist in Texas and the remainder of the carcass disposed of. There is no outward indication the mountain lion had been in captivity, and KDWP personnel hope additional analyses will lead to where it came from.

The last wild mountain lion documented in Kansas was killed in Ellis County in 1904. However, mountain lions are known to occur in Colorado within 75 miles of the border of southwest Kansas and have been documented with increasing frequency in recent years in the Panhandle of Oklahoma. Mountain lions have also been dispersing from the Black Hills of South Dakota. KDWP staff completed a plan in July 2004 to guide their response to the presence of mountain lions under various scenarios.

No hunting season for mountain lions has been established in Kansas, and they may not be killed without reason. Landowners are permitted to destroy wildlife, including mountain lions, found in or near buildings on their premises or when destroying property, but they may not possess such animals with intent to use unless authorized. The landowner who allegedly killed this mountain lion could be cited for killing and/or possession of the cat.

—KDWP news

PROFILE: with Mark Shoup

ELITE LAWMAN

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) natural resource officer Larry Stones has been honored with the 2007 Shikar-Safari Club International Wildlife Officer of the Year award. Stones, from Kirwin, received the award in February in recognition of efforts above and beyond activities normally associated with "game wardens."

In nominating Stones for the award, Region 1 Law Enforcement Supervisor Mel Madorin said, "Officer Stones made 53 cases during the 2007 hunting season, but he also does a great job of preventing violations. He does a weekly radio program where he speaks on a wide variety of topics, including regulations and ethics. He is very well-known in his district and teaches hunter education, boater education, and furharvester education in towns throughout his district and beyond. He regularly gives general public programs that include a skins and skulls identification program he created. Because of this emphasis on education as well as enforcement, I believe that Officer Stones is one of our very best."

After high school, Stones, who grew up just east of Smith Center in the small town of Lebanon, went to Cloud County Community College on a basketball and track scholarship. He attended Ft. Hays State and Kansas universities before being hired by KDWP in 1986, where he started his career in southwestern Kansas. It wasn't long, however, before an opening



came up in Smith County, and he found himself working his old home turf.

When asked why he became a natural resource officer after years in the oilfield, he credits his inspiration to retired Region 1 Law Enforcement supervisor Jerry Bump.

"Jerry was a conservation officer when I was in high school, and I really looked up to him," Stones explains. "He was just a great guy and had such great respect for people and natural resources. I like helping people, and Jerry really got me pumped up in that regard."

Stones also believes he is where he is meant to be. "I started out teaching hunter education classes the traditional way [with just 10 hours in the classroom]," he says. "But when I started arresting kids who had gone through my classes, I realized I needed to do something different. That's when I incorporated live fire and a trail walk into my courses. Things are much improved now. I guess this is one reason I feel like there's a purpose for me to be out here, and I enjoy every minute of it."

"Throughout his career, Officer Stones has become the embodiment of what a wildlife officer should be," Kevin Jones, KDWP Law Enforcement Division director, added. "He is relentless in pursuit of violators and is recognized as an effective and fair law enforcement officer. His efforts have gained him community support and established an information network of concerned citizens in his district."

Each year, Shikar-Safari honors one officer that each state believes has done the most outstanding job in enforcement of their game laws, protection of wildlife, and implementation of conservation programs. The group also provides a \$20,000 death benefit for all recipients of Wildlife Officer of the Year award killed in the line of duty.

HUNTING SPOTS

with Marc Murrell

Take A Kid Hunting

I've had lots of good hunting spots over the years. I remember growing up in northeast Kansas when a buddy and I would take off after Saturday morning's basketball practice. We had one of those rare places where you could shoot greater prairie chickens, pheasants and quail, all in the same section. We'd hunt until sundown Saturday and be out again at legal shooting light the next morning. The scenario was repeated nearly every weekend of the upland bird season.

Over the next three decades, many of my favorite hunting spots have disappeared, either due to leasing, habitat degradation, or change of ownership. It has become more difficult to find places to hunt, but with a little leg work and luck, I still manage to find some good hunting. Over the years, I've realized that, while those hunting spots are treasured, it's the experiences that make memorable moments. And I've recently learned that no matter where I'm at, the best hunting spot I've found is right next to one of my kids.

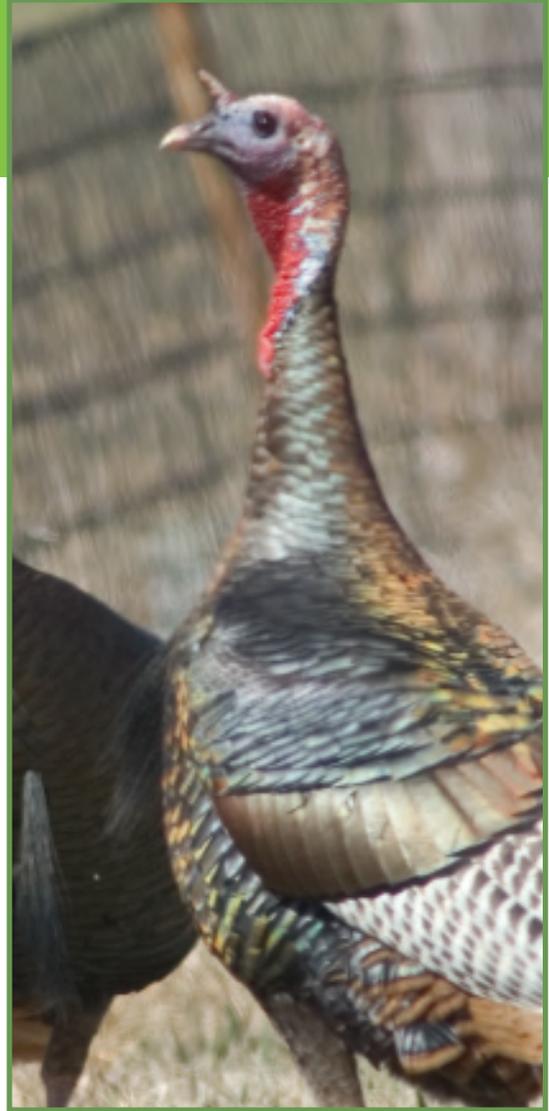
My daughter, Ashley, was the first, and we've had lots of memorable outings from the time she was old enough to walk. She was a spectator for the first few years, but she eventually killed a couple turkeys on her own. Now 15 years old, she's busy with school, sports, and teenager stuff, so it's harder to get her out.

But Ashley's twin 9-year-old brothers, Brandon and Cody, enjoy the outdoors and have followed in her foot steps. They love hunting, but right now the part they enjoy most is exploring of the natural world. We've interrupted many hunts to look at an old turtle shell, a bone, or pick up turkey feathers.

For me, it's spending precious time with them, but watching them succeed at hunting is more special than anything I've ever done. The perfect example was during this year's youth/archery turkey season. I bowhunted the first morning by myself, called in two longbeards, but never got a shot. My heart was racing, but it was nothing compared to the excitement I experienced the next couple of evenings on after-school hunts with my boys. The range of emotions during these hunts was overwhelming and much more intense than anything I've experienced solo. Up close and personal encounters with various hens and gobblers, a near miss and each boy finally connecting on beautiful Rio Grande gobblers found my heart ready to leave my chest more than once.

"Dad, you were breathing REALLY loud," Cody said after he killed his bird.

My enjoyment from time spent hunting with my kids is simple: It's time spent together helping them learn about what it means to be a true conservationist. Everything is new and exciting in a youngster's eyes. Their fascination is contagious. It won't be long and they'll be grown and gone. But we'll always have those special times and memories from days afield to reflect on. I guess that's the magic of the outdoor world and all the more reason to take a kid hunting if you have the opportunity.



LOOK FOR RECORDS



In 2007, only one fish record was broken among the 36 species of fish for which the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) keeps records. The more popular species for which records are kept include largemouth bass (11.75 pounds), channel catfish (36.5 pounds), white crappie (4.02 pounds), and walleye (13.16 pounds). The longest-standing record is the 4.63-pound black crappie caught in 1957. The most recent record breaker was the 7.6-ounce brown trout caught in May 2007. The state record for flathead catfish (123 pounds) is also a world record. A list of all current state records may be found on Page 37 of the 2008 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary, available wherever licenses are sold or online at www.kdwp.state.ks.us.

Potential state record fish must remain intact until officially certified as a state record and should be weighed on certified scales as soon as possible (before it is frozen). The weighing must be witnessed. The fish must be

species-confirmed by a KDWP fisheries biologist or a Fisheries and Wildlife Division regional supervisor. (Phone 620-672-5911 for the nearest biologist, or consult the 2008 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary. A fish tissue sample may be required.) A color photograph of the fish must accompany the application. Frozen fish will not be accepted. All applications for state records require a 30-day waiting period before certification.

A fish does not have to be a state record to be a trophy. Anglers who catch a big fish that is not a state record may qualify for a Master Angler Award. To attain Master Angler status, a fish must be of a certain length, depending on species. Lengths of the species for which KDWP issues Master Angler Awards are also listed on Page 37 of the 2008 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary, along with directions for applying and an application.

—KDWP news

STATE PARKS HONE IN ON GEO-CACHING

Outdoor enthusiasts looking for the next great adventure will find it this summer in Kansas state parks—a geocaching contest. From May 1 to November 1, 2008, two caches can be found in each state park. The coordinates of the first cache site will be posted on the KDWP website. Only when cachers find and open the first cache, will they find the coordinates of the second cache site.

Upon finding the second cache site, the participant will sign a log sheet and take a certificate with the cache site code on it and turn it in to that park office. Then they will receive a park specific location (i.e. I found the Geocache @ Tuttle Creek State Park) ink pen, and the official statewide KDWP Geocaching Entry Form. Entry forms will be validated at the park office for each second cache found.

Prizes will be awarded based first on how many points/geo-caches were earned. Every second geocache found at each participating location will be worth one point. Prizes will be awarded after the contest ending date of November 1 2008 on a point and time system. First place prize (50 winners) will be a choice between two nights in a Wildlife & Parks camping cabin or one annual camping permit for 2009. The first 50 geocachers to earn all of the 26 points and submit their forms win the first place prize.

Those who earn points but mail their forms in after the first 50 will automatically roll down to the second place prize category. Second place prize (100 winners) will be a choice between one night in a camping cabin or 14-day camping permit for 2009. The first 100 geocachers to earn 18-25 points and/or roll down first place qualifiers will win the second place prize. Those who earn 18-25 points but mail their form in after the first 100 will roll down to the third place category. Third place (200 winners) will be two night's camping and utilities. The first 200 geocachers to earn 5-17 points and/or roll down second place qualifiers will win the third place prize.

This is a new outdoor recreation opportunity for Kansas state parks, one that we hope will introduce new patrons to their public playgrounds as well as provide new activities for our regular customers.

—KDWP news



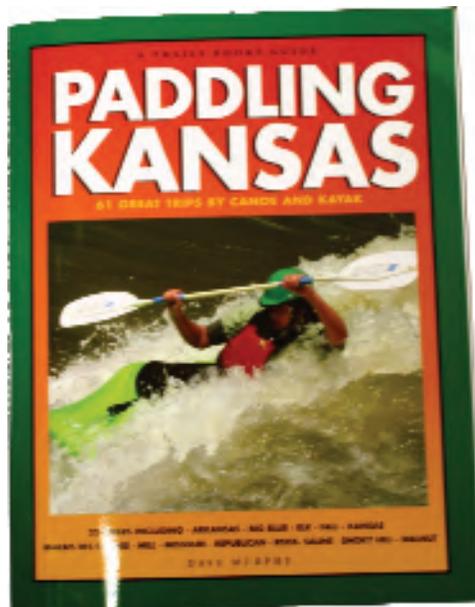
RIVER FLOAT GUIDE

For years, Kansas canoe, kayak, and float-trip enthusiasts have pined for places to put boats in the water and enjoy a peaceful day on the river. While those places have always existed, they haven't been well-known. With the publication of Dave Murphy's *Paddling Kansas*, Kansas river riders can now find ready access to more than 925 miles of the best public recreational rivers and streams in the state, including more than 100 single- or multi-day trips, and more than 200 public river access points.

Precise maps show roads, "put-ins" and "take-outs," rapids, dams, and river mileage. Each trip is described in a comprehensive and entertaining narrative that includes camping opportunities, water levels, shuttle routes, alternate access points, and the geography and history of each river.

Murphy has kayaked, rafted, and canoed thousands of miles around the world, from Montana to the Philippines. An expert whitewater kayaker and rafter, he has served as president of the Kansas City Whitewater Club and the Kansas Canoe and Kayak Association.

For more information or to purchase a copy of *Paddling Kansas*, go online to www.trailsbooks.com/ —KDWP news



PFD ZERO TOLERANCE

Kansas boaters are advised to pay special attention to life jacket requirements this boating season.

"We plan to take a zero-tolerance approach to life jacket violations this year," says Dan Heskett, KDWP boating law administrator. "Our sole purpose is to reduce fatalities on our waters and create a safer environment for all boaters."

More than 90 percent of boating-related fatalities in the U.S. in 2006

were drowning victims who were not wearing a life jacket. Kansas law requires that each vessel be equipped with a proper life jacket, also known as a personal flotation device (PFD), for each person on board.

In addition, Kansas law requires that children 12 years old and younger wear a life jacket while on board any vessel. Also, any occupant of a personal watercraft, regardless of age, must wear one. Kansas law also requires that PFDs be readily accessible for each passenger on board. Failure to have life jackets readily accessible is the most common PFD-related violation in Kansas.

"In an accident, it can take very little time for a vessel to sink," Heskett adds. "For this reason, it is important for the occupants to have their life jackets accessible, at minimum. But we highly recommend that all boat occupants wear them when on the water, whether required by law or not."

—KDWP news



AMBLING ARMADILLOS



Nine-banded armadillos were first reported in the 1940s when northward migration from Texas and Mexico reached the Sunflower State. By the 1990s, armadillos were common, and they continue to expand northward well into Nebraska. Today, armadillos have developed a substantial breeding population in Kansas.

Bony plates cover most of their bodies. Although they often move slowly, they can run and jump but have no real defense other than their protective shells. They burrow into the ground for living quarters and grub for insects on the soil surface.

At one time, cold temperatures and dry conditions were thought to be limiting factors for northward armadillo migration. However, continued expansion into areas with severe winters has cast doubt on this theory. Now, research indicates that soil hardness plays a larger role because armadillos must be able to dig easily wherever they live.

Although a nuisance when they grub in lawns or landscaped areas, they seldom cause economic loss. They do not eat crops or vegetation. Learn more about these odd animals by visiting KDWP TV at www.kdwp.state.ks.us.

—KDWP news

GUIDE TO KANSAS BIRDS AND BIRDING HOT SPOTS NOW AVAILABLE

Easy-to-use guide displays Kansas birds in stunning photos, reveals best birding spots

LAWRENCE – With exceptional habitat diversity and its key location at the hub of the Northern Hemisphere’s migration corridors, Kansas is a bird-watcher’s paradise. More than 470 avian species have been documented within its borders. From spectacularly beautiful birds such as painted buntings to elegant migrants such as Hudsonian godwits, birders can find abundant rewards every time they take to the field.

A new book, *The Guide to Kansas Birds and Birding Hot Spots*, focuses on 295 species most likely to be encountered in the state. It helps occasional day-trippers or backyard observers identify and learn about birds that regularly occur in Kansas, with stunning color photos that enable those new to the hobby to identify their discoveries. Tips on where to search for these species are also included.

Co-authors Bob Gress and Pete Janzen, with a foreword by Kenn Kaufman, have produced a guide that divides birds into 18 groups based on similarity in appearance, habitat, or behavior, following taxonomic order only partially to make identification easier for the beginner. The entry for each bird gives its size, identifying features (including sexual and seasonal distinctions), and where and when it can be found. Each account includes a brilliant color photo of an adult of the species, with additional views of selected birds to illustrate male, female, or juvenile plumages.

“This is a delightful and authoritative

introduction to Kansas birds with a wealth of information on how and where to find them,” said William H. Busby, coauthor of *Kansas Breeding Bird Atlas*.

The authors point out the best birding locations in the state – more than two dozen hotspots of which they have intimate knowledge and that reflect different bird communities thriving only a few hours apart. The book also provides a checklist for all state birds, a calendar of Kansas bird activity, and recommendations for binoculars and other field guides.

Gress is director of the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita and coauthor of *Faces of the Great Plains: Prairie Wildlife and Watching Kansas Wildlife: A Guide to 101 Sites*. His wildlife photography has appeared in many publications.

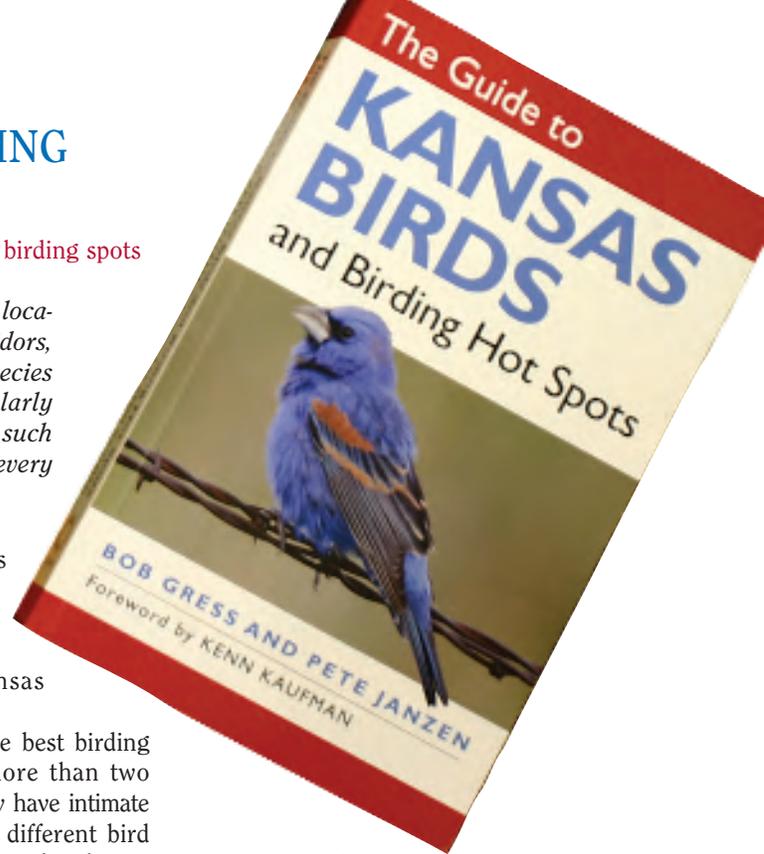
Janzen is active in the Kansas Ornithological Society and the Wichita Audubon Society and is author of *The Birds of Sedgwick County and Cheney Reservoir*, as well as numerous articles

on Kansas birds.

Kaufman is author of the popular Kaufman Focus Guides, which focus on birds and butterflies in North America, and is the recipient of the American Birding Association’s prestigious Ludlow Griscom Award.

The Guide to Kansas Birds and Birding Hot Spots is available in paperback (ISBN# 978-0-7006-1565-0) for \$19.95 and contains 368 pages, 351 color photographs, and one color map. For more information, phone Ranjit Arab, University Press of Kansas, at (785) 864-9170, or email rarab@ku.edu.

–KDWP news



SPORTSMEN’S CAUCUS

Sportsmen have an influential ally in the Kansas Legislature since formation of the Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus at the Topeka Country Club on March 25. The Kansas Caucus becomes the 35th state affiliated with the National Assembly of Sportsmen’s Caucuses (NASC).

A sportsmen’s caucus is formed by like-minded legislators who understand America’s hunting, fishing, and trapping heritage and its importance to wildlife management and its economic importance. Caucus members set partisan politics aside and maintain a unified front by remaining informed and organized on sportsmen’s legislative issues they see every day.

Legislative co-chairmen of the new bipartisan caucus are House Majority Leader Ray Merrick (Stilwell) and Rep. Gary Hayzlett (Lakin). During the evening, the co-chairmen announced the formation of the caucus, its objectives for 2008, and its affiliation with NASC.

Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucuses nationwide are actively engaged with the sportsmen’s community, state conservation organizations, and the outdoors industry to advance issues that ensure the heritage of hunting and fishing.

To learn more about how Kansas’ 425,000 sportsmen spend \$1.6 million per day, visit www.sportsmenslink.org.

–KDWP news

2008 Kansas Deer Regulations

Major changes are in store for Kansas deer hunters in 2008. Below is an explanation of why the changes were made, as well as a list of some of the biggest changes.

In 2005, the House Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism Committee requested that the department examine deer-related statutes and report back in 2006 on ways those statutes could be simplified and condensed. A 10-member task force of KDWP employees was assembled.

In January 2006, the task force presented draft recommendations that included some radical changes to the Kansas Legislature. However, because such a wide variety of stakeholders would be affected, the Task Force asked for a year to gain public input before making final recommendations. House committee members agreed.

The task force began soliciting public input immediately, initially through email, telephone and a department BLOG site. The recommendations were discussed at the public Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission meetings held throughout the state. And a mailed survey of resident, nonresident and landowner permit holders was conducted in July. In August, a series of 14 public meetings were held throughout the state to solicit further public input. More than 600 attended those meetings. Task force members looked at and considered all comments.

The main issues remained constant - resident hunters are concerned about their hunting opportunities as leasing for hunting access has become more common. In some cases, they are competing with nonresident hunters who are willing to pay what many consider exorbitant amounts for hunting access. Landowners who have begun gaining income through deer hunting leases are concerned about nonresident permit availability under the current system. Constituents from both sides expressed dislike for the current nonresident allocation method and the nonresident transferable permit system.

In September of 2006, the Task Force went back to



the drawing board and adjusted its recommendations to accommodate input. There were no easy answers and the Task Force knew it couldn't please all. The final recommendations were presented to KDWP administration, then to the Wildlife and Parks Commission, and finally to the 2007 Legislature. There were more changes and compromises at the legislative level before HB 2437 passed.

The most obvious changes as a result of the bill include elimination of the landowner nonresident transferable permit. And a formula was developed for setting nonresident permit quotas based on demand, landowner preference, deer population trends, age structure in the harvest, as well as other biological factors. Rather than setting specific numbers for archery muzzleloader and firearm permits, nonresidents will designate the type of permit they desire upon application, and it will be drawn from the quota of white-tailed either sex permits.

Residents will enjoy the opportunity to hunt during any season with the Any Season White-tailed Either Sex permit valid statewide. This permit allows the holder to hunt muzzleloader, archery and firearm season with legal equipment. The statewide archery, either species/either sex permit it available again for resident hunters.

Season Dates

Youth and Disability: September 13 - 21, 2008

Early Muzzleloader: September 22 - October 5, 2008

Archery: September 22 - December 31, 2008

Early Firearm (DMU 19 ONLY): October 11 - October 19, 2008

Regular Firearm: December 3 - 14, 2008

Extended White-tailed Antlerless-Only: January 1 - 4, 2009

Extended Archery (DMU 19 ONLY): January 5 - 31, 2009

2008 Permit Types

Resident Firearm Either-species/Either-sex Deer Permit (white-tailed or mule deer buck, doe or fawn) \$37.50 – general resident; \$22.50 – landowner/tenant; \$22.50 for youth. This is a limited draw permit that is valid either in the West Zone, which includes Deer Management Units 1, 2, 17, and 18, OR in the East Zone, which includes Deer Management Units 3, 4, 5, 7, and 16, during the regular firearm season using any legal equipment.

Resident Any-Season White-tailed Deer Permit (white-tailed deer buck, doe or fawn) \$32.50 – general resident; \$17.50 – landowner/tenant; \$17.50 – youth. This permit is available over the counter and is valid statewide in any season with equipment legal for that season.

Resident Archery Either-species/Either-sex Deer Permit (white-tailed or mule deer buck, doe or fawn) \$32.50 – general resident; \$17.50 – landowner/tenant; \$17.50 – youth. Available over the counter and valid statewide with archery equipment only, during archery season.

Resident Muzzleloader Either-species/Either-sex Deer Permit (white-tailed or mule deer buck, doe or fawn) \$32.50 – general resident; \$17.50 – landowner/tenant; \$17.50 – youth. Available over the counter and valid either in the West Zone, which includes Deer Management Units 1, 2, 17, and 18, OR in the East Zone, which includes Deer Management Units 3, 4, 5, 7, and 16, during the early muzzleloader season and the regular firearms season using muzzleloading equipment only.

Resident Hunt-Own-Land Deer Permit (white-tailed or mule deer buck, doe or fawn) – \$17.50 Hunt-Own-Land permits are valid for any season with equipment legal for that season, and only on lands owned or operated for agricultural purposes. This permit is available to individuals who qualify as resident landowners or as tenants, or as family members living with the landowner or tenant. Evidence of tenancy, if requested, shall be provided to the department and may include, but is not limited to, Natural Resource Conservation Service records, Farm Service Records, or written agricultural contract or lease documentation. Permits are limited to one per 80 acres owned or operated. This permit is not transferable.

Special Hunt-Own-Land Deer Permit (white-tailed or mule deer buck, doe or fawn) – \$32.50 This permit may be issued to a resident landowner's or tenant's siblings and lineal ascendants or descendants, and their spouses, regardless of residency. (For example, a grandson and his wife, a daughter and her husband, a parent, or a brother and his wife would be eligible for this permit.) The permit is valid only on lands owned or operated by the landowner or tenant, and may be used in any season with equipment legal for that season. Total number of Hunt-Own-Land and Special Hunt-Own-Land permit may not exceed one per 80 acres owned or operated.

Nonresident White-tailed Deer Permit (white-tailed deer buck, doe or fawn) \$322.50. Hunter applies in one deer management unit and selects one adjacent unit in which to also hunt, as well as the season choice (archery, muzzleloader, or firearms) at the time of application. Muzzleloader permit holders may hunt during early muzzleloader season and regular firearms season using muzzleloader equipment only. A nonresident who successfully draws an archery or muzzleloader White-tailed Deer Permit in Unit 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 17, or 18 may also apply for one of a limited number of Mule Deer Stamps for an additional fee of \$102.50 submitted at time of application; if drawn, the applicant's archery or muzzleloader white-tailed permit converts to an either-species/either-sex archery or muzzleloader permit. Preference points do not count toward this stamp.

Nonresident Hunt-Own-Land Deer Permit (white-tailed or mule deer buck, doe or fawn) \$77.50
Hunt-Own-Land permits are valid for any season with equipment legal for that season, and only on lands owned or operated for agricultural purposes. Only those individuals listed on the property deed are eligible. Use of this permit does not require a Kansas hunting license.

Antlerless White-tailed Deer Permit (any white-tailed deer without a visible antler) \$17.50 – general resident; \$10 – youth; \$77.50 – nonresident. The first Antlerless White-tailed Deer Permit purchased will be valid statewide, including all KDWP-managed public hunting areas. The second permit purchased by an individual is valid in DMUs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 19 on private land (with landowner permission), WIHA properties and Cedar Bluff Wildlife Area. Up to three more antlerless White-tailed permits may be purchased, which are valid only private land and WIHA properties in DMUs 7, 8, 10a, 12, 13, 15, 26 and 19. Antlerless White-tailed Deer Permits are valid during any season with equipment legal for that season. Permits may be purchased over-the-counter July 1 – Jan 30, 2009.

Antlerless Either-species Deer Permit (any white-tailed or mule deer without a visible antler) \$17.50 – general resident; \$10 for youth; \$77.50 – nonresident. Valid only in DMU 3 only during any season with equipment legal for that season. Permits are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

All hunters must possess a permit that allows them to take an antlered deer before they can purchase an antlerless deer permit.

Other changes for the 2008 season include allowing scopes on muzzleloaders for both the muzzleloader season and the firearm season. Crossbows will be legal equipment for firearm permit holders during the firearm season and during the extended white-tailed antlerless only season.

There's A

text and photos by Dan Mulhern,
endangered species biologist U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

New Ferret In Town



The black-footed ferret is the rarest mammal in North America and was once thought to be extinct. Reintroducing captive-bred ferrets in the species' former range requires one vital thing: thriving prairie dog towns.



The last wild black-footed ferret was seen in Kansas near the Sheridan County town of Studley on Dec. 31, 1957. Nearly 50 years later on Dec. 18, 2007, black-footed ferrets were returned to Kansas in rural Logan County, 60 miles southwest of that last sighting. The release marks the beginning of an experimental effort that biologists hope will result in ferrets once again making Kansas prairies their home.

The black-footed ferret is an endangered species and one of the rarest mammals in North America. A relative of the weasel, a ferret is approximately 18-24 inches long and weighs about 2.5 pounds. It has a black face mask, a black-tipped tail, and black feet. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) oversees endangered species and has been breeding this species in captivity for the past 20 years. The Logan County animals are part of that ongoing effort.

Ferret recovery has been a roller coaster ride. When the last captive black-footed ferret died in 1979, the species was believed to be extinct. Two years later, a wild population was discovered in a prairie dog colony near Meeteetse, Wyo. In 1985, disease ravaged this colony, and both prairie dogs and ferrets dangerously declined. By 1987, only 18 ferrets could be captured to initiate captive breeding efforts jointly undertaken by USFWS and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The species' recovery plan seeks to establish 10 or more populations

throughout the historical range by 2010. If that can be done where each population contains at least 30 breeding adults, the species may be reclassified from "endangered" to "threatened." By far the most successful site established to date is in the Conata Basin of South Dakota.

The Kansas reintroduction story began in October 2005, when a handful of ranchers approached the USFWS to offer using their ranchlands for ferret recovery. Initial excitement at this proposal was tempered with a healthy dose of skepticism. After all, ferrets require prairie dogs for survival, and many people have tried diligently over the last century to eliminate most of our prairie dogs. Prairie dog control has been a controversial issue among private landowners in this region of Kansas for many years.

Each of the prospective landowners, including The Nature Conservancy and other private ranchers, had been notified by Logan County at least once that they needed to eradicate their prairie dogs. They responded by controlling prairie dogs along their property borders, trying to minimize prairie dog movement onto neighboring areas. The effectiveness of these control measures varied with location and effort. However, the fact remained that several landowners wanted to manage prairie dogs on their property and were interested in the black-footed ferret recovery program.

Habitat assessments were conducted for each cooperator's prairie dog complex, and it was determined that together they contained high-quality habitat for black-footed ferrets. Altogether, the release area is much smaller than traditional ferret release sites in northern or western states, which typically comprise tens of thousands of acres of prairie dogs on federal or tribal lands. However, many of those large sites have been hit by sylvatic plague, an introduced disease fatal to both prairie dogs and ferrets. One big advantage of the Kansas site is the absence of any occurrences of plague in resident mammals.

A reintroduction plan and environmental assessment were drafted, and in November 2006, a public meeting was held in Oakley to get input from local citizens. As expected, detractors didn't want anything that would result in areas of prairie dogs going uncontrolled. Secondly, some had typical fears of what an endangered species might mean to the local area.

The USFWS addressed these concerns, pointing out that by using an experimental recovery permit to conduct this work, the Service would be assuming liability for any ferrets accidentally killed. The prairie dog maintenance issue was more difficult, but a program provided a mix of state, federal, and private money to assist with prairie dog control for landowners surrounding the release sites. It's a fact that we must be willing to kill some



Twenty-four ferrets made the van ride from Wellington, Colo. to Logan County.

prairie dogs for the greater good of maintaining a core complex to support ferrets.

The internal administrative review of the draft assessment was published in October 2007. After a 30-day public comment period, a final Environmental Assessment addressed all the concerns and questions that had been raised, including those received at the meeting a year earlier, and concluded that an experimental reintroduction could proceed. Now the question was whether ferrets would be available, or if we would have to wait until the next year because animals are typically provided for release in early fall.

As slowly as things can creep along with the federal govern-



Each ferret carrier was opened near the entrance of a prairie dog burrow. Several were reluctant to leave in the daylight. Black-footed ferrets are nocturnal, and several left their carriers at twilight.

Black-footed ferrets are reared in three captive-breeding facilities, then finished in outdoor pens in Colorado, where they learn to hunt prairie dogs.



ment at times, they can also happen quickly. Notice was received in mid-December that a small number of ferrets was available for immediate release.

After a whirlwind of activity and contacts, a van carrying 24 captive-bred black-footed ferrets left northeastern Colorado for Kansas, arriving on Dec. 18. The animals had been reared at three U.S. breeding facilities and one in Canada, and had all been “finished” at outdoor pre-conditioning pens at the USFWS’s National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center, near Wellington, Colo. Here, they learned to hunt prairie dogs on their own.

Although this was a relatively small allotment, it was divided among three primary landowners with some of the best habitat. Ten ferrets were released on The Nature

After five years, an assessment will be made to determine whether the Kansas experiment seems headed in the right direction.

Conservancy’s Smoky Valley Ranch, and 14 others were divided between two Logan County ranches.

Each ferret was transported in an individual pet carrier and

released at the opening of an active prairie dog burrow. The first ferret released seemed reluctant to accept the hole, but after a brief investigation of the surface, it finally disappeared underground. Within minutes, two agitated prairie dogs popped out of that same burrow and raced off between onlookers’ feet across the prairie to find a safer refuge. I suppose it was their opinion we had just ruined the neighborhood.

The last few animals released went out in twilight after the sun went down. Nighttime is the right time for nocturnal ferrets, when they are safe from daytime predators like hawks and eagles



Spotlight surveys will let researchers know if the initial release was successful. Next fall, surveyors will be looking for any young that may have been produced over the summer.

that are common on these properties. Nocturnal owls, coyotes, and badgers can all be problems, and several ferrets are lost each year at other reintroduction sites.

Human-caused mortality is expected to be low, primarily

from roadkills or accidents with farming and ranching machinery, or possibly from a ferret straying off the reintroduction site and onto an area where prairie dogs are being poisoned. These accidental

deaths would be accounted for in the Service's experimental permit, and no legal actions would be taken.

This spring, surveys were conducted at night, using powerful spotlights that allow the ani-

mals, or at least their eyeshine, to be seen in the dark. Eight ferrets were located at the two release sites. Another survey will be conducted this fall, and this time researchers will be looking not only for the original animals but any offspring that may have been produced over the summer. This early fall survey will become the annual means of assessing the population. Release of additional animals will undoubtedly be necessary to get the population jump-started.

After five years, an assessment will be made to determine whether the Kansas experiment seems headed in the right direction. Hopefully, ferrets will persist in reasonable numbers and will be successfully reproducing. If not, remaining Logan County animals may be captured for relocation.

The keystone to all this is the prairie dog, without which the ferret recovery will fail. And there are other benefits to managing prairie dogs. Scientists have verified over the years that a myriad of plants and animals occur in higher densities and numbers in a prairie dog colony than on similar habitats in the absence of prairie dogs. The micro-ecosystem created within a prairie dog colony is incredibly complex and diverse, allowing creatures such as burrowing owls and swift foxes to thrive. An opportunity exists today in Kansas to play a small part in bringing one of the most endangered mammals back from the brink of extinction. ♡



Prairie dogs are the key to ferret survival. Black-footed ferrets feed almost entirely on prairie dogs, and large contiguous towns are necessary for a ferret population to thrive.



Mike Blair photo

New Home For Swifty

text and photos by Matt Peek
wildlife research biologist, Emporia Investigations Office



The swift fox was inadvertently eliminated from much of its range through predator control aimed at larger species. However, the smallest canine has successfully returned to some of its shortgrass prairie haunts and is now common in western Kansas. A trap and transplant program is targeting some of these Kansas foxes for reintroduction in South Dakota.

set the trap, of course.) Rather, our sole quarry today was the swift fox. But unlike the results from other traplines, the new home of these lucky little canines wouldn't be the fur shed. This is the second year of a project that could last six years in which the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe will capture 30-40 swift foxes per year under a KDWP collector permit. The little foxes native to western Kansas will be transported and released onto the Lower Brule Sioux Reservation in central South Dakota.

This is a project which has been long in the making. These cat-sized furbearers were eliminated from much of their historic range by the 1950s, primarily as a result of predator control efforts aimed at other species. However, as predator control activities waned, swift foxes began to gradually replenish suitable habitat, which consists of grazed short- or mixed-grass prairie, wheat fallow or stubble fields, or other areas of very short vegetation that allow for swift fox to visually avoid

This wasn't my trapline. Shaun Grassel, wildlife biologist for the Department of Wildlife, Fish and Recreation of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe had set it out a couple days before, but that didn't diminish my excitement of seeing a closed cage trap door. As we eased closer, our eyes strained in the predawn light to see what the trap held. But the anticipation quickly tapered as a black and white

pattern emerged inside the cage.

Our disappointment in having captured a skunk wasn't just because of the difficulty that comes with releasing one from a cage trap without getting sprayed. (Actually a successful release is a high-stakes game of patience, a little luck, the utmost attention to wind direction, and it can be quite entertaining at times — when you weren't the one who

predators, particularly coyotes. Today swift foxes have reoccupied much of the western portion of their original range.

In Kansas, this includes approximately the western three to four tiers of counties. And Kansas, along with Colorado and Wyoming, support what is considered the core of the swift fox population in the country.

In 1995, the swift fox was listed as a “candidate species” by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Federal Threatened and Endangered Species Act – meaning the Service considered it imperiled

enough to list, but that all available resources were already being used on other species of greater need. As a result of this listing, representatives of the 10 state wildlife agencies within the historic swift fox range joined with select federal wildlife and land management agencies and Canada to form the Swift Fox Conservation Team. The team has met annually since 1994 with a primary objective of securing the future of the species through improved research and management. Much has been accomplished, including monitoring efforts

that were primarily responsible for the delisting of the swift fox by the Service in 2001.

As research progressed, the focus of attention shifted from those areas where swift foxes are to areas where they could be. Reoccupation of their northern range had been slow, though suitable habitat appeared present. So beginning in 1998, a series of reintroduction efforts supported by the team have been initiated at several locations, including the Blackfeet Reservation in northern Montana, the Ted Turner-owned Bad River Ranch in westcentral South Dakota,



Swift foxes aren't as wary as coyotes and can be successfully trapped in box-type live traps. Usually, a bait such as canned jack mackerel, prairie dog, or deer meat was used to lure the fox into the cage, where a the trap door was tripped to close.

and the Park Service-managed Badlands National Park in southwest South Dakota. The Lower Brule Sioux Reservation lies in central South Dakota, approximately 75 miles from the Turner property and nearly 100 miles from Badlands National Park.

Let's get back to our trapline. Swift foxes are considered unwary compared to their canine relatives. While foothold traps and restraining snares are necessary for consistent live-capture of coyotes and red fox, the cage or box trap was the trap of choice for this project. A

variety of different sizes and types of cage traps were used, but the typical 10-inch by 12-inch by 32-inch raccoon-sized trap was most common. Swift foxes were enticed inside with one or often a combination of baits including canned jack mackerel, chunked rabbit, prairie dog, or deer meat, and Powder River Paste Bait, which is a professionally manufactured predator bait popular among fur trappers. Pasture and field corners, trail crossings, and livestock water tanks were some of the key trap locations. A typical line consisted of about 20 traps spread over several miles, and each member of a six- to eight-person crew



Swift foxes were dusted to control fleas and external parasites at the trap site. Then the trap was covered with a burlap sack to keep the fox calm during transportation.

generally had a line out.

Upon capturing a fox, it was dusted with garden variety Sevin at the capture site to help control fleas and external parasites. Then the trap with fox still inside was covered with a burlap bag for transport back to the home base for further processing. In 2006, trapping was conducted in September

and "home base" consisted of a campsite at Scott State Park. In 2007, the effort was conducted in December, necessitating a more temperate place to stay. Fortunately a private house used occasionally as a hunting lodge was available in southwest Logan County, an excellent central location for traplines that covered portions of Logan, Gove, Wallace, Thomas, Sherman, Scott, and Wichita counties.

Once back at the lodge, processing began by using a bag to contain the foxes until a "holder" could get a grip on the scruff of the neck with one hand and cover the eyes and hold the mouth closed with the other. This handling





The author poses with a fox just before applying the cover at a typical trap site. Pasture and field corners, trail crossings, and livestock water tanks are ideal trap locations. Foxes were then transported to a “base” site for testing and vaccination.

position reduces these otherwise tenacious and aggressive little canines into a passive and docile state, and most calmly sat on the holder’s lap while they were aged by tooth wear, body condition was assessed, blood was drawn, and rabies and 5-way vaccines (to protect against canine distemper, parvovirus, and other ailments) were administered. Researchers also took tissue samples with a small ear punch for genetic analysis, and hair samples were collected for long-term genetic storage at the University of New Mexico, Museum of Southwest Biology. Telemetry collars were fitted and microchips implanted for future tracking and identifica-

tion. The blood samples were shipped overnight to the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory to test for exposure to sylvatic plague, tularemia, and canine distemper. Test results for plague were obtained the next day, all of which were non-positive. Tularemia and canine distemper results were received later, and all were non-positive as well. The final step in Kansas was a trip to the Oakley Veterinary Service to obtain a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection and an import number from the South Dakota Animal Industry Board, after which the foxes were free to go to their home on a new range.

At the reservation in South

Dakota, male and female foxes were paired and placed into temporary enclosures on the release site. Enclosures included an 8-inch corrugated pipe, 8 feet long buried into the ground but open at ground level on both ends – simulating a den, which is necessary for protection from predators and the elements year-round. Foxes were given about a week to become accustomed to the area and their new mate, then pens were opened allowing the foxes to venture out on their own. This “soft release” is preferable to a “hard release” because simply taking the animal to its new habitat and releasing it could leave a den-dependent species like swift fox more vul-

nerable to predation.

Following release, foxes are typically located twice a week by their radio-collars. The 39 foxes captured over six days this December were placed in the vicinity of those released the year before. It's too early to have much information on this most recent release, but at least 8 of the 39 foxes released in 2006 are paired up on or near the reservation, and three of these pairs are thought to have produced pups. Several other foxes lost their collars and may be in the vicinity as well. Six unpaired female foxes left the reservation, apparently in search of a mate, and wound up in the vicinity of the other two reintroduction sites. One of these females was discovered during similar telemetry work on the Bad River Ranch, where she paired with a fox reintroduced from Wyoming, and they reared a litter of five pups. There was also some mortality; 12 foxes were killed by coyotes, four were killed by vehicles, and three died of unknown causes.

While the number of losses may seem high, swift foxes are short-lived animals that rarely live past 3 or 4 years in the wild. In fact, studies have shown over half the foxes in some populations may die annually. Coyotes are by far the most important source of mortality for swift foxes throughout their range and usually kill for competitive rather than predatory reasons, often leaving killed foxes uneaten. With such a high natural turnover rate, swift foxes have a rather fluid social struc-

ture well equipped to replacing lost mates, re-establishing territories, and reproductively offsetting high annual population losses. This is important not just for the success of the reintroduction, but also allows swift foxes to naturally replenish populations that have served as a source for the reintroductions. Furthermore, trapping from widespread locations and spreading the net impact of the removal over

hundreds of square miles ensures the ability of swift fox populations to rebound from the removal without consequence. Swift foxes are so adept at this that they are legally harvestable in Kansas and several other states, and the removal that occurred as part of this reintroduction project is not unlike that which can already occur during the legal furbearer harvest season.

Often with reintroductions



Once at home base, the foxes were aged by tooth wear, blood was taken, and they were vaccinated. Handlers grabbed the foxes by the scruff of the neck and covered their eyes with gloved hand. This kept the otherwise feisty foxes calm throughout the procedures.

of this nature, it takes a couple years to build the population to a level where it becomes self-sustaining. For example, had available males been present, it's likely the females that dispersed off the reservation would have paired and reproduced there. Despite their loss to the reservation, the dispersal serves as a strong indicator that the three reintroduction sites are not isolated by unsuitable habitat, and will eventually form a contiguous population of swift foxes in central and western South Dakota. So while it's still early in the process, the results so far are encouraging.

As is the case with nearly all our wildlife successes, we owe a great deal of gratitude to the private landowners in the region, who provided land access for swift fox trapping. Not only were all the foxes



Foxes were fitted with telemetry collars and microchips for future identification. After release, the foxes are located twice weekly to follow movements, survival and breeding.

trapped off private land, but it was truly a privilege to spend a few days on some of these unique properties in the short-grass prairie. It was also gratifying to work with the Tribal representatives and students who participated in the trap-

ping effort, but most important for us all is the satisfaction of having participated in a worthy effort to further secure the long-term conservation of the swift fox on the Great Plains. ♡



In addition to the recent round of foxes released on the Lower Brule Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, earlier efforts transplanted them on Blackfeet Nation lands in Montana, as well as other Badlands ranches in South Dakota.



STAR OF THE CAST

by J. Mark Shoup
associate editor, Pratt

photos courtesy of the Martin and Osa Safari Museum, Chanute

Osa and Martin Johnson gained enormous fame producing exciting movies of their travels in the South Pacific. And while the camera often caught Osa hunting exotic or dangerous game, fishing may have been her first outdoor passion.

To say that Osa Johnson was a remarkable woman is an understatement. The petite, 5-foot, 2-inch beauty who was once named one of America's best-dressed women and always looked her best even in the wilds of Africa, was a crack shot and an expert fly angler. A small-town girl from a middle class family in Chanute, Osa eloped in 1910 at age 16 to marry Martin Johnson, an adventurer from Independence who was nine years her senior. Martin was full of ambition and wanderlust, already having spent time bumming across Europe and traveling the South Seas on the voyage of the Snark with novelist Jack London (*Call of the Wild, White Fang*).

For seven years, the couple toured the U.S. on the famous Orpheum vaudeville circuit, regaling audiences with tales, slide shows, and dramatizations of life in the exotic South Seas, sharing the spotlight with the likes of Will Rogers. During this time, they raised enough money for their first safari, during which Martin would exercise his considerable skills with both still and motion picture cameras. Their nine-month voyage to South Seas islands never visited by "civilized" man began in 1917 and was the first of many trips — some lasting as long as four years — over the next 20 years, the most spectacular being in Africa.

With Martin behind the camera and Osa in front — often facing dangerous big game, rifle in hand — the two

gave birth to the modern wildlife documentary. Their footage was so impressive that subsequent trips were sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History and George Eastman, of Eastman-Kodak camera fame. They made nine commercial movies and dozens of lecture films and shorts and rivaled the greatest film stars of their time in fame, if not for-

tune. And while audiences were held breathless by the wildlife and primitive tribes they filmed, Osa was the star attraction. Engaging and uninhibited with tribal peoples, the beautiful young woman from Kansas helped unveil western stereotypes of the "dark" parts of the planet. Ernest Hemingway somewhat grudgingly admits as much in his

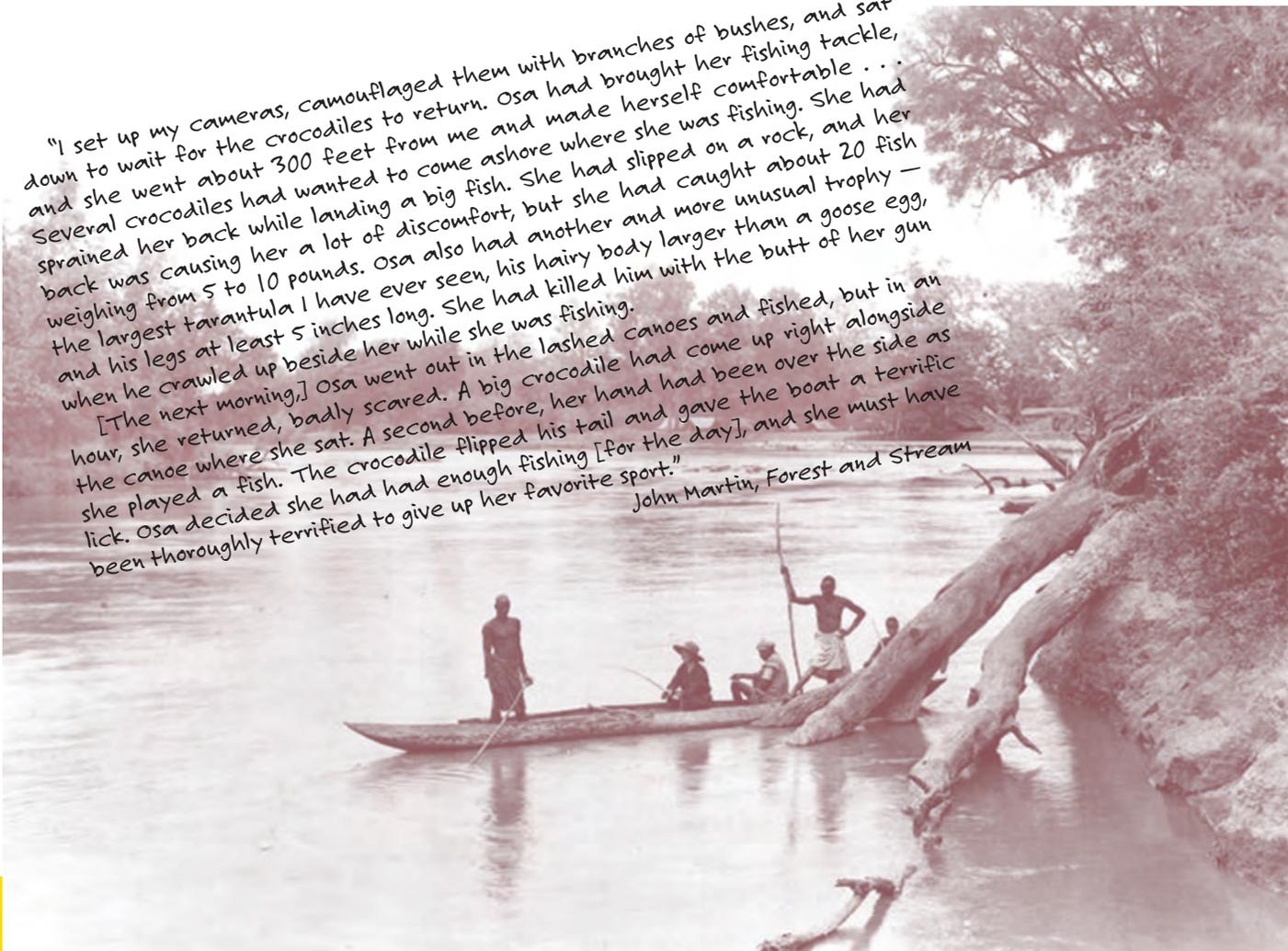


Osa with two trophies, weighing 5 and one-half pounds and 3 and one-half pounds, taken near Nanyuki, Kenya, during her "four years in paradise," 1924-1927.

"I set up my cameras, camouflaged them with branches of bushes, and sat down to wait for the crocodiles to return. Osa had brought her fishing tackle, and she went out about 300 feet from me and made herself comfortable . . . Several crocodiles had wanted to come ashore where she was fishing. She had sprained her back while landing a big fish. She had slipped on a rock, and her back was causing her a lot of discomfort, but she had caught about 20 fish weighing from 5 to 10 pounds. Osa also had another and more unusual trophy — the largest tarantula I have ever seen, his hairy body larger than a goose egg, and his legs at least 5 inches long. She had killed him with the butt of her gun when he crawled up beside her while she was fishing.

[The next morning,] Osa went out in the lashed canoes and fished, but in an hour, she returned, badly scared. A big crocodile had come up right alongside the canoe where she sat. A second before, her hand had been over the side as she played a fish. The crocodile flipped his tail and gave the boat a terrific lick. Osa decided she had had enough fishing [for the day], and she must have been thoroughly terrified to give up her favorite sport."

John Martin, *Forest and Stream*



In 1933-1934, Martin and Osa undertook a flying safari of Africa, becoming the first to film African wildlife from the air. As always, Osa found ways to get away and fish, and her catches often fed their crew.

famous short story, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," saying that Africa ". . . was known as Darkest Africa until the Martin Johnsons lighted it on so many silver screens."

Martin may have taken top billing on the marquee for their films, but on the screen and in the field, Osa put food on the plate — literally. Osa's mother had taught her to cook and sew, but her father had taught her to shoot, hunt, and fish. And although she became the first woman to be issued a big game hunting license in Africa,

fishing not only became what Martin once described as "her favorite sport," it proved an indispensable talent.

Everywhere they went, Osa — always in charge of food — fished not just to put food on the table for Martin and their often very large crews, but because she plain loved it. If she were compared to Annie Oakley as a crack shot (which she was), she likely had no female peer with a fly rod in hand. It was not unusual for her to return from a day's fishing with 50 to 100 pounds of fish for the crew.

Perhaps Osa's most productive time fishing came during four years the couple camped near Lake Paradise, in northern Kenya, from 1924 through 1927. During this time, it was not unusual for Martin to awake and find Osa already gone from camp, but she would soon return with fish for breakfast. While out filming, Osa would often take time to fish if they stopped near good water for lunch. One day, they had crossed a river but had to make camp and wait another full day for their wagons to catch up. Osa was up at the crack of

dawn and fished all the next day.

“When I weighed my catch that night, I found that I had more than 150 pounds. Of course, I was delighted,” she beamed.

Martin often worried about Osa going out in bush alone, without a gun bearer, following streams where lions or leopards might be lurking. But she was undeterred.

“My enthusiasm for fishing made me quite reckless,” she once admitted. “With or without waders, I would take long chances, and often I came home dripping wet. It seemed to me that Martin scolded me

more about coming home wet and late from fishing than for any other reason. The fishing ‘bug’ had never bitten him.”

Nonetheless, Martin often seemed more proud of her catches than she did. He spoke of her adaptation to their life of adventure glowingly, saying, “If ever a man needed a partner in his vocation, it is I, and if ever a wife were a partner to a man, it is Osa Johnson.”

Other than the crocodile episode, it seems that little stopped Osa from fishing. If she slipped on a rock and fell over her head in water, her reaction was simply, “That was the sport, and who but a fisherman

could understand?”

Once, she had caught about 30 pounds of fish that a native helper was carrying back to camp for her. As they crossed a stream, both slipped, and the fast-moving water carried them toward a waterfall. The native dropped the fish but rescued Osa. Once safely on the bank, she started to scold the native over the loss of the fish before she realized that he had saved her life.

Given her passion for angling, this time in Africa must have seemed, as the title of one of her books implies, like four years in paradise. “There are so many fish in Africa, run-



This photograph shows Osa in 1933 with a large creel of trout taken from the clear streams of Mt. Kenya. Trout were stocked by the British government and were plentiful while the Johnsons' were in Kenya.

"The trout love gay-colored flies, for the insects of Africa are brilliant-hued. Most of the flies we use at home for salmon can be used in Africa for trout: the Darum Ranger, Silver Doctor, Jock Scott, Alexandra, all gave me great fishing, and I took my poundage records on number six hooks with a 3 and one-half-ounce Hardy rod.

The streams are crystal clear and cold, most of them tumbling down from high altitudes, the Mount Kenya streams coming directly from glaciers at the top. So I dyed my leaders green to make them invisible."

ning in great schools, that at times the water seems almost solid with fins and tails," she wrote. "It looks as though one could walk on them."

In this part of Africa, Osa even found trout, much to her delight. The English government had stocked rainbow and brown trout in the rivers near Nanyuki, and Martin would often drive Osa up river, so she could fish her way down. It was a familiar pursuit for such a seasoned angler. "I always fish with flies," she wrote, "for it is more sporting and more fun." And she readily adapted her techniques to the African environment.

At the time of the Lake Paradise expedition, the streams were so over-stocked that the provincial government encouraged large catches, which Osa undertook with relish. On occasion, she would take as many as 15 fish from a single pool and come back the next day for an equally large creel. Within 130 miles of Nairobi, in every direction, Osa described streams that "any critical fisherman would



Osa took this strange-looking fish on an outing during the Johnson's four years on Lake Paradise. Martin often worried about Osa because she would often fish through the day and return to camp late in the evening.

call ideal." She would catch as many as 60 pounds of brown trout in a single morning and once took 148 trout in a single day. While this seems extreme by today's conservation standards, one must consider that these streams had been overstocked, and the fish thrived in rivers that few people fished at the time.

Osa often spotted a lazy trout loafing before it saw her, and in this situation, she was deadly. "One whip cast, dropping fly under his nose, and the trout was mine," she wrote. She caught her record rainbow in this area, a 13 and one-half-pound monster.

But Martin never got the knack. One day, she found him chasing grasshoppers because he couldn't catch a thing on his artificial fly. Just to tease him, she said that he "didn't hold his mouth right," and grabbed his

rod and caught a trout on her second cast. Although she knew it was just luck, Martin proudly repeated this story to friends.

It must have been heart-breaking for Osa to leave this place. Often, their cook would meet them at a predetermined spot after a day of fishing. As she described one such evening, "There he was, with a fine fire and a heap of coals all ready, and when the others came up, my trout were in the pan.

"We sat there, in the cool crisp evening, over one of the best dinners I have ever had, watching the sun set on the frosty pinnacles of Mount Kenya.

"'Next to paradise, the most beautiful spot in the world,' said Martin."

Wherever the Johnsons were, Osa always fished. Whether visiting royalty in Europe or stop-

ping over in Australia, she would slip away whenever she had the opportunity.

In 1937, a tragic airline crash in California killed Martin and left Osa badly injured. She recovered, however, and continued touring the country as an advocate for wildlife, wrote a number of books about her and her husband's adventures, wrote children's wildlife books, and developed a line of educational stuffed animals endorsed by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF).

But she never stopped fishing. She regarded New England as one of her favorite places to fish, and in 1939 won the "Largest Fish" honor at the World Series of Freshwater Angling in the Eastern United States, where she was given a silver trophy cup and a "beautiful Thomas rod." In 1950, NWF named Osa America's "First Lady of Exploration" and honorary co-chair (along with Bing Crosby) of its annual National Wildlife Week. Her final trip to Africa was as technical director for

Daryl F. Zanuck's movie *Stanley and Livingston*, starring Spencer Tracy.

Perhaps Osa was dreaming of lazy trout floating clear streams of Mt. Kenya, or perhaps more exotic fish leaping from the surface of placid Lake Paradise. Wherever she may be, Osa's work lives on. It helped spark the world's imagination and woke many to the wonder and importance of the natural world. May her creel always be full. ♡



Osa died of a heart attack at the age of 58, 16 years after Martin's untimely death. Shortly after Martin's death, she had written longingly of the natural world she had enjoyed:

"The jungle is cooperative. It gives that it may live. That is the secret of nature and love. . . . Yes, I am going home — to the little compound in East Africa . . . I shall go there because I love the world as God made it, a world that every man loves, I think, in the secret places of his heart."

Acknowledgment:

*Thanks to Conrad G. Froehlich and the Martin & Osa Johnson Safari Museum in Chanute for generous provision of time, literature, and photographs that made this fascinating project possible. (For information on the museum, go to www.safarimuseum.com.) For more detailed accounts of the Johnsons' exploits, read Osa Johnson's *I Married Adventure* and *Four Years In Paradise*, as well as Pascal James and Eleanor M. Imperato's *They Married Adventure*.*

*Among Johnson fans are zoologist and television personality Jack Hanna and arguably the world's best-known field biologist George Schaller. The Johnsons' films continue to be used in modern wildlife documentaries and television programs such as *National Geographic* and the *Discovery Channel*.*

Osa poses with silver trophy she won in 1939 for the "Largest Fish" at the World Series of Freshwater Angling in the Eastern U.S.



Why Do We Have Different Length And Creel Limits?

by Mike Miller
editor, Pratt

You'd think I would know better. I spend a good deal of time each year sitting through Wildlife and Parks Commission meetings as they set regulations. Then I'll read through the minutes from these meetings. On top of that, I read through the *Fishing Regulation Summary* copy as we prepare the annual pamphlet. I should know our fishing regulations by heart, but apparently my retention isn't very good.

Several years ago, I was fishing at Wilson Reservoir, casting a chartreuse curly-tail hoping to catch smallmouth bass. As usual on Wilson, I was catching a mixed bag. I'd hooked several nice smallies and

Creel and length limits can maintain the quality of a fishery, provide larger fish, spread the harvest among anglers, and even help control undesirable species.

a couple of white bass. But as I made a cast toward a shallow wind-swept point, I set the hook into yet another species.

In Wilson's clear water, I could easily see the white-tipped tail of the fish as it neared the boat. "Walleye," I said excitedly, to no one in particular, since my wife was reading a book and working on her tan at the back of the boat. She looked up from

her reading to watch as I fumbled to get the toothy fish into the boat without a net. It was 17 inches long and thick.

"Man that's a nice one," I commented. "These are the best-eatin' fish that swim."

"Are you going to keep it?" Lisa asked, out of curiosity since she doesn't eat fish.

I looked up dumfounded. I couldn't remember what the length limit for walleye was on Wilson. I knew that there were 15-inch, 18-inch, and even a few 21-inch minimums, but I wasn't sure what was in place for Wilson.

"Nah," I said, hiding my disappointment. "I don't want to bother cleaning one fish tonight."

I caught another 16-inch walleye later that day, which I also released but would have made a nice meal combined with the earlier fish. By the way, there was and is a 15-inch minimum on Wilson. You'd think I'd know better.

Complicated regulations are definitely an issue with KDWP biologists and managers. There is an argument that over-complicated regulations may serve as a barrier to casual anglers, as well as potential new anglers. Recruiting new anglers and hunters is a point of emphasis in all of our programs. However, retention of existing license buyers is also important, and fisheries biologists work every day to provide the best fishing opportunities they can.

You might ask why we can't have one set of creel limits and length limits for lakes statewide. While most anglers understand the need for harvest restrictions, many wonder why there are so many different regulations. Here's the long answer.

Kyle Austin is a fish management specialist who has worked in fisheries for more than 25 years. He has worked as a fish hatchery culturist, a district fisheries biologist, and now administers the department's four hatcheries. When asked why we have so many different creel and length limits and why they are different on some lakes, this is what he had to say.

"Fish harvest restrictions play an important role in managing the quantity and quality of fish populations available to anglers. With harvest restrictions, high use can be maintained without sacrificing quality of fish populations," he explained.



Mike Blair photo

While varying harvest restrictions among lakes can be frustrating, anglers should keep in mind that all restrictions are designed to improve angling opportunities.

"However, fish recruitment and production varies among lakes. It's possible to have liberal limits in lakes with good recruitment and growth. Whereas, limits must be more restrictive in lakes where fish populations are maintained by stocking."

So, ideally, each body of water could have its own set of harvest restrictions suited to the conditions. Of course, that would be impractical and complicated for anglers. KDWP's fisheries section provides a compromise,

offering a variety of management packages from which district fisheries biologists can choose from. This provides flexibility for biologists while limiting the number of creel and length limits anglers need to be familiar with.

"Fisheries biologists have a number of tools they can use in deciding which harvest restrictions to use. Creel surveys, fish population surveys, exploitation studies, age and growth analysis, and computer mod-

eling software are all used in determining what length limits would likely result in reaching management goals and objectives,” Austin went on to explain. “And yes — angler opinion and comments are solicited locally to gather public support and educate.”

A creel limit is the number of a particular species of fish that an angler can keep in a given day. We have a set of statewide creel limits for most species, as well as more restrictive creel limits at specific water bodies. In theory, creel limits prevent overharvest. However, some creel limits are the result of social pressure rather than biological factors. Creel limits can spread harvest among anglers, but the impact of a creel limit depends on the fish species, lake productivity and fishing pressure. In species that are maintained only through stocking, creel limits help spread harvest and sustain angling opportunities.

In addition to creel limits, biologists also use length limits to limit harvest. Of course, a length limit basically protects fish shorter than the minimum length. One reason length limits are recommended is to provide anglers with larger fish. For example, crappie anglers may prefer to catch crappie longer than 10 inches. However, if most of what they catch are 8-9 inches, they may end up taking those fish home. A 10-inch minimum length limit put in place can protect these shorter fish, allowing them to grow before they are harvested.

Length limits can also protect a fish population from overharvest. Angler harvest can be very high on some popular species,

such as walleye. Creel limits rarely have the impact that length limits do because most anglers rarely catch and keep a daily limit. To reduce harvest in most lakes, creel limits would have to be set very low. So, an 18-inch length limit on walleye, for example, can protect the fishery from overharvest.

Another reason for a length limit is to maintain densities of certain predatory fish, so they can feed on and control less desirable fish. For example, at Cheney Reservoir, biologists established length and creel

Creel limits rarely have the impact that length limits do because most anglers rarely catch and keep a daily limit.

limits of 21 inches and two per day for walleye and wipers. The goal was to maintain enough large predators in that lake so that they could prey on white perch, a less desirable species that easily overpopulates. Smaller lakes have length limits on saugeye, a walleye-sauger hybrid, since they have proven effective predators on crappie. Prolific white crappie can easily overpopulate small bodies of water.

Length limits can also maximize use of the resource, especially with black basses. An 18-inch minimum length limit on largemouth bass forces catch-and-release fishing, which allows fish to be caught more than once.

Slot-length limits are set to protect a certain sized fish so that anglers catch larger fish while avoiding stockpiling very small fish. This type of length limit is usually used with black bass in lakes with good bass recruitment. In theory, the slot length limit, protecting fish 13-18 inches long, allows harvest of smaller fish, which provides better growth rates for the remaining fish.

Because there are several different options available to biologists, each of several lakes you fish may have a different set of length and daily creel limits for certain species of fish. While it may be difficult for anglers to remember them all, they can stay informed by using the *2008 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary*. Within the pages of the pamphlet, length and creel limits are listed for each reservoir and lake. Water bodies are grouped according to the region of the state in which they are located. With a little research, you can find the regulations for your favorite waters. However, if you’re like me, the best way to know is to keep a copy of the regulations summary in your boat or tackle box.

One measure of success for department fisheries biologists is angling success on the waters they manage. Each works within the fisheries section guidelines to implement management programs that will provide and maintain the best fishing opportunities possible. Once those regulations are in place, it’s up to the anglers to learn them and comply with them. Good fishing! ♡



REDNECK SURE-N-TURE

text and photos by Marc Murrell
Great Plains Nature Center manager, Wichita



I guess I've never really classified myself as a bona fide redneck. However, I love hunting and fishing, and NASCAR, and I've got a four-wheel-drive truck, all distinguishing characteristics. But I don't hunt out of the window on the way to work, and I don't keep rods and reels in my vehicle at all times. My truck doesn't have any fake rubber bull testicles hanging off the trailer hitch. Instead, it's got normal-sized tires, heated leather seats and a Bose stereo with a 6-disc CD changer. And I watch NASCAR on a 55-inch high definition big screen television complete with Dolby digital surround sound.

I know I resemble some of Jeff Foxworthy's "You Might Be A Redneck" one-liners, but I've never been too drunk to fish. There was that one time in college when the police caught me fishing in the city swimming pool at 3 a.m. But I was fishing just fine. I was just having a little trouble knowing *where* I was fishing.

"You're a middle-class redneck," my wife quickly and sarcastically clarifies my classification confusion.

I really don't mind rednecks. In fact, they're my people. I've just never really thought of me as one of "them." But on an outdoor adventure last summer, I might have jumped right to the head of the class.

My plans on the trip were to beat the near 100-degree temperatures by heading to the woods at legal shooting light for a quick squirrel hunt. I reckoned (a redneck word I use often, but in the proper tense) it wouldn't take long to shoot a few squirrels and

then head down to a small creek and catch some catfish.

I walked into the timber shortly after 6 a.m and started calling. On the fourth stop I hit the squirrel-in-distress (I suppose the fact that I have an assortment of these calls seals my redneck identity.) call, and immediately had a fox squirrel sound-off and come running. Tree to tree it hopped before stopping only 20 yards above me. A shot from my .22 and it tumbled to the ground. I placed it on a decaying stump because I knew I would return and pick it up before leaving.

I eased through the

timber in search of more tree rats. I bagged another on the next stop, and as I picked it up, I thought if I managed to catch some catfish, the resulting dinner would be a redneck version of surf-n-turf. Granted, it's a stretch to compare squirrel to steak and catfish to lobster, but it still sounds pretty good, and you have to kill it and catch it yourself. What more could a redneck ask for?

I moved to the last place I would call because I didn't have permission to hunt beyond the fence (a point in my favor since some rednecks give us all a bad name not paying attention to

*I really don't mind rednecks.
In fact, they're my people.
I've just never thought of me
as one of "them." But on an outdoor
adventure last summer, I might have
jumped right to the head of the class.*



Summertime squirrel hunting is challenging because of the thick foliage. That's why the author carries his trusty squirrel-in-distress call. Every redneck has a couple.



The makings of a country delicacy: Redneck Surf-N-Turf – good grub in the eyes of any true blue redneck. And the eatin’ part is only half the fun.

property lines). An immediate response to my distress call yielded a quick shot, and squirrel number three was on the ground. I started using the bark call, got another squirrel fired up, and readied my rifle. Squirrel fever got me, and I missed, but it made the fatal mistake of pausing during his escape and I didn’t miss twice. A quick glance at my Dale

Earnhardt commemorative watch told me it was 7:30 a.m., time to go fishing.

With the three squirrels in hand, I returned to the first one I’d shot. I was a bit perplexed when I didn’t see it lying where I’d left it. I looked to the side and saw nothing more than about 6 inches of its tail sticking out of a hole. I grabbed its tail and felt a bit of resistance. A

forceful jerk on the tail found me frantically flailing as a 5-foot black rat snake came flying out of the stump with the squirrel’s head in its mouth. I may have screamed like a little girl, but you couldn’t prove it. My red-neck brothers will be ashamed, but my worst nightmares involve snakes. I have one every time I see one. Just ask my wife. Many a night she’s been wakened as I scream, holler, and flail like something’s got me. She thinks it’s funny, but I fail to see the humor in near-death experiences so real I wake up sweating.

A quick tug-of-war with what would later be described to all who would listen as a “15-foot anaconda” and I reclaimed MY squirrel.

“Go get your own dinner!” I hollered back at the serpent as I ran to the truck, my feet hardly touching the ground.

I swapped my .22 and squirrel calls for a fishing rod and bucket of catfish bait that had been sitting on a shelf in my garage. I knew it would be good because the lid was bulged to the point I thought it might explode. I decided to relieve the pressure the day before, and my twin 8-year-old boys happened to be downwind.

“Ohhh, Dad!” they hollered, while gagging and pinching their noses. “That smells like butt!”

Leave it to 8-year-old boys to come up with that kind of analogy, but it wasn’t far off. I have to admit, I kind of like the smell (of the bait that is) because it reminds me of good fishing and tasty catfish fillets. And it’s entertaining, too, because every time one of the neighbor kids

comes over I have them stick their noses in the bucket and take a good whiff. I consider it educational because city kids need to learn about our red-neck culture. Plus, it's funny stuff and strengthens their gag reflex. Anything that smells like that has to be good catfish bait.

Past trips to the same creek had yielded decent results using globs of nightcrawlers for bait, but I've discovered that good stink bait works fast if there's a fish within smelling distance. I pitched a glob of the goo on a No. 4 treble hook into a pool and within seconds saw my line jump and felt a hit. I set the hook and the twisting pull of a fat 2 and one-half-pound channel cat was unmistakable.

I moved to the next bend in the creek and pitched my bait near a brush pile. Within seconds, I felt a thump and watched my line take off. I buried the hook but now sensed more resistance. The 4 and one-

Anything that smells like that has to be good catfish bait.

half-pound fish headed downstream and after several minutes of fighting I finally beached him at my feet. Another toss to the same spot yielded instant gratification in the form of a 2-pound channel cat.

The results were the same at the next hole, except I missed the fish on the first hook set. Dunking my treble hook again and pulling out a wad of the nasty-smelling stuff, I threw to the same spot and got slammed before it even hit the bottom. A fat, 4-pound fish was flopping at my feet a short time later. Although I could have stayed a bit longer and tried for more,

these four fish were plenty for a nice meal, and I opted to shoot a few photos of the fish and squirrels and head home.

Upon arriving, I was met by my boys and they wanted to hear the details of the morning. They were most intrigued by the fierce battle with the "15-foot anaconda" where I was almost eaten alive as I chronicled the life-and-death struggle. They were anxious to see the squirrels and catfish, so I opened the cooler lid just a sliver to make sure the "anaconda" hadn't hitched a ride home.

The surf-n-turf feast would occur the next evening with only my 14-year-old daughter for a witness. Although she'd eaten squirrel, caribou, elk, deer and many other wild things as a young toddler, she's way too cool for anything like that now.

"You're weird, Dad," she said as I tried to convince her it would be good.

I told her of my plans to photograph a plateful of squirrel and catfish, as well, and she couldn't quit laughing.

"Mom's right, you are a redneck," she giggled as she watched me cooking.

If that makes me a redneck then so be it. I'm okay with it. Now if I could just get rid of my snake phobia and embrace the reptiles like a REAL redneck, my wife and I would both get more sleep. ♡

Author's Note: Some of the details of this story may have been embellished. I'll let you guess as to what's fact or fiction. The only real truth might be that I am indeed a redneck.



A feast fit for a king, or a redneck. The author was proud enough of his culinary achievement, he preserved it in digital memory. It looks good enough to eat.



ANGLING IN THE CITY

by Jessica Mounts, *district fisheries biologist, Wichita*
and Jessica Seibel, *Wichita State University communications student*
photos by Mike Blair

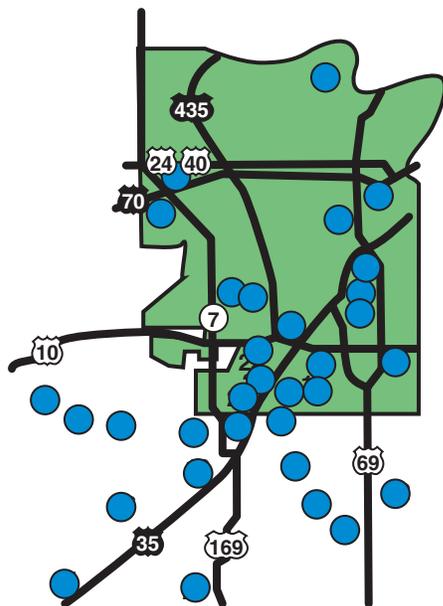
KDWP's [Urban Fishing Program](#) includes channel catfish, trout, bluegill, and wiper (white bass/striped bass hybrid) stockings, provides fishing clinics and fishing education opportunities, and works with cities in and around major metro areas in Kansas to provide fisheries management and improvement of fishing access. While KDWP supports these goals with four separate programs — the Urban Fishing Program, the Community Fisheries Assistance Program, the Trout Program, and aquatic education — the programs all work together in urban areas to provide fishing opportunities that serve a large number of anglers with varying interests and abilities, in locations close to home. With 84 ponds and lakes in the Urban Fishing Program, city dwellers in Kansas don't have far to travel to enjoy the classic pastime of fishing.

Managing fisheries in an urban area presents a certain number of challenges, especially matching supply with demand, including enough fishing locations and fish. KDWP established the Urban Fishing Program in order to bolster channel catfish populations to serve urban anglers. More than 200,000 adult channel catfish from one-half pound to 1 and one-half pounds are stocked in urban ponds every year through this program, along with bluegill hybrids and wiper. Channel catfish are stocked on schedule nearly every two weeks from

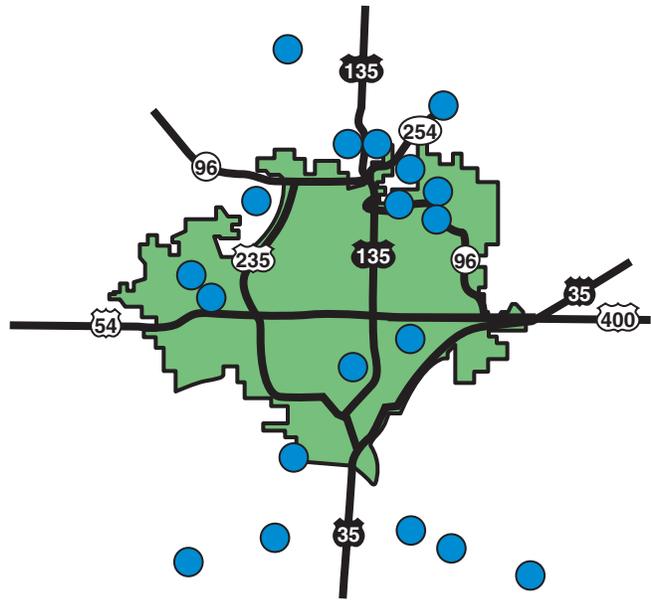




General Kansas City Urban Fishing Locations



General Wichita Urban Fishing Locations



**FOR DETAILED MAPS ON THESE AND OTHER
URBAN FISHING AREAS CONSULT
THE 2008 FISHING ALTAS**

March to October.

In addition, trout are also stocked throughout the state in 25 locations, and the Community Fisheries Assistance Program creates partnerships in communities and opens even more doors to fishing opportunities, including 248 community lakes. Even beyond these specific programs, biologists across the state provide fishing clinics to children and families, reaching thousands of urban citi-

zens every year.

Sedgwick County Park in northwest Wichita includes five lakes and one naturalized stream. The lakes receive channel catfish stockings through the urban program, and the stream along the west edge of the park provides some of the best trout fishing in the area during trout season, Oct. 15-April 15.

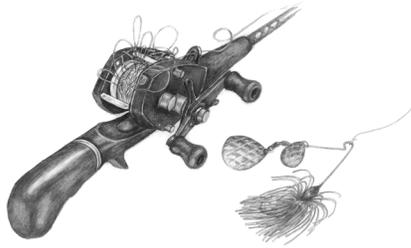
The city of Derby is home to three separate fishing lakes that are also a part of the catfish stocking program, and other communities such as Andover, Park City, Mulvane and Colwich also provide local

fishing in the Wichita area.

Rose's Pond in Lenexa in the Kansas City area is known as a great urban fishing location, along with several lakes located in Olathe and Overland Park.

Most urban lakes also feature family-friendly features, such as restrooms, plenty of green space, and picnic areas. Kansas counties served by the Urban Fishing Program are Atchison, Butler, Douglas, Finney, Johnson, Leavenworth, Lyon, Ottawa, Pottawatomie, Reno, Riley, Saline, Sedgwick, Shawnee, and Wyandotte. These programs and others are funded through the Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration Program. ♡





Backlash

by Mike Miller

Heroes Needed

To his credit, KDWP's Hunter Education coordinator, Wayne Doyle, has dramatically increased emphasis on ethics in the Kansas Hunter Education curriculum. That's important because, with such a large portion of our population who don't hunt, the way hunters are perceived by nonhunters will dictate the future of our traditions. It's also important because most hunting in Kansas occurs on private land, so how landowners feel about hunters will have a role in future opportunities.

The word ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, meaning character. In philosophy, ethics defines what is good for the individual and for society.

A popular definition of ethics is how you behave when no one is watching. And that's probably not a bad way to look at it, as long as that doesn't mean following the regulations when no one is looking. If you're on a desolate highway with little chance of seeing a highway patrolman, how fast do you go? Going the speed limit is still just following the law. Ethics are personal guidelines each of us follows while in the field.

Modifying ethics, or situational ethics, to fit a situation is common today. A deer hunter may avow that he doesn't believe in hunting over bait. Then he'll say that a bait pile is okay for a youth deer hunt. After all, youngsters have to have some action or they won't enjoy their first hunt, and a bait pile provides a good, "ethical" shot angle.

Much of our behavior in the field is tied to the customs and ethics we were taught growing up. What's considered normal and ethical in one region of the country may be considered unethical in another. Hopefully, each hunter's and angler's actions develop and evolve as they gain experience and mature. Each of us must define what our personal ethics are, but we shouldn't demand that others follow those same ethics. Even though we may try, it's impossible to regulate ethical behavior because when it becomes a regulation, it's no longer an ethic.

So, are ethics more important today than they were

20 years ago? Maybe. Consider the message sent by the media today. Everything is about killing a bigger buck or catching a bigger fish. If you're really good at bass fishing, you can be a millionaire and become famous. Kill that monster buck, and you might become a "prostaffer" and have your picture in magazines or maybe even get your own hunting television show. Hunters and anglers are bombarded with advertising for products that will take all the work out of becoming successful in the field or on the water. It's easy to lose track of why hunting is important.

Or perhaps, it's easy to start hunting for the wrong reasons. If your primary reason for hunting is to kill a monster buck and gain notoriety, what might you do to fulfill that goal? How would your ethics develop? If your primary reason for fishing is to win a tournament or become a famous angler, how might you approach learning to fish differently?

Don't get me wrong. I love to see a big buck as much as the next hunter. It's not necessary for me to kill one to be successful, but the potential of seeing a big buck excites me. And I am an outdoor gear junky though I have no desire to compete in hunting or fishing.

I hunt and fish because I was inexplicably drawn to do it. I was extremely fortunate to be able to hunt and fish with my granddad and dad. I learned to hunt and fish while growing closer to the most important people in my life. Hunting and fishing keeps me connected to those people.

When I was a boy, one of my heroes, besides Dad and Grandad, was Daniel Boone — the one Fess Parker played on television. I admired his woodsmanship, skill with a flintlock rifle, hunting ability, and bravery. He was honest and ethical. Our kids need heroes like that today.

In fact, youngsters may be drawn to become hunters and anglers if the hunters and anglers they know have high ethical standards. If youngsters admire these people, they will want to be like them. Think about it. ♡

