

KANSAS

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On Point

by Mike Hayden



Year-round Deer Management

It may seem unusual to be writing about deer management in this issue, but there are a couple of reasons it's relevant. At their March and April meetings, the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission will discuss and vote on some of our deer hunting regulations. Also, there have been several bills introduced by this year's legislature aimed at reducing the number of deer.

There are no easy answers to deer issues in Kansas. We live in a diverse state, and deer densities and population dynamics vary dramatically. That's why we manage deer within 18 management units. The units are divided by roads and highways for people's convenience but are based on regionally similar habitat and physiographic characteristics. They have been in place for more than 30 years, so a long history of information is on record.

And as diverse as our deer habitats are, so are our deer program stakeholders. We hear from muzzle-loader hunters, archery hunters, rifle hunters, landowners, outfitters, those who want trophy-sized bucks and those who just want a deer for the freezer. Those who don't hunt are also involved. In some groups a complaint that there are too many deer will elicit head nodding approval from all. In other groups, a comment about too few deer and too much hunting pressure will get similar responses. As with any public policy issue, facts can help people understand and accept decisions.

Some believe more permits and longer seasons are the answer. The truth is that in many management units, hunters can purchase five antlerless white-tailed deer permits in addition to their either-sex whitetail permit. (To stabilize or reduce the deer herd, antlerless harvest is necessary.) Resident whitetail permits are available online and over the counter. All nonresidents who applied during the 2009 application period received a permit. Once hunters receive their either-sex permit, they can purchase antlerless permits over the counter. And some type of deer season is open from mid-September to the end of January. That's more than 100 days of deer hunting.

Some may believe that hunting pressure is too high, that the big bucks are nearly gone, and deer hunter success has fallen off. The facts of our recent harvest don't support that theory. Hunter success rates are still

very high – more than 50 percent for bowhunters and 65 percent for firearm hunters. Age structure in the harvest is still very good – the majority of bucks taken are older than 2.5 years.

We do listen, but we also look at the data. Permitting recommendations are based on a variety of factors, including population trend, landowner desire, public desire, age structure in the harvest, deer-vehicle accidents, damage complaints, and overall herd and habitat health. Deer management in Kansas is also influenced by the fact that 97 percent of land is privately owned, and access for hunters can be an issue.

Deer-vehicle accidents are a legitimate concern and a factor in management decisions. According to the Kansas Department of Transportation, since peaking at just more than 10,000 accidents in 2001, there have been fewer than 10,000 deer-vehicle accidents every year. This past winter, a news release by a major insurance company indicated that deer-vehicle accidents in Kansas had increased 41 percent in the past eight years. According to KDOT's most up-to-date information, there were 9,296 deer-vehicle accidents in Kansas in 2002. In 2008, there were 9,371. That's less than a 1 percent increase. Even allowing for unreported accidents, it's difficult to understand how anyone came up with a 41-percent increase.

Refinement in management allowed deer populations to prosper on farms and ranches throughout the Midwest. As populations grew, so did the desires of people, and management focused on deer quality and trophy opportunities while controlling populations to reduce crop damage.

Today, deer are not limited to rural areas. They prosper in our urban areas, causing concern about vehicle accidents and potential disease and creating additional management concerns. While hunting is the most efficient and beneficial way to manage deer in rural areas, science and technology may provide additional control techniques for urban deer in the future.

Deer management is a year-round, every-day task. There are no easy solutions and none that will make everyone happy, but KDWP staff and the Wildlife and Parks Commission strive to build and maintain a management program that works for all. ♡

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Front Cover: Kansans are fortunate to have abundant natural prairie, a precious resource that many take for granted. Mike Blair snapped this shot. **Back Cover:** Thanks to dedicated volunteer hunter education instructors, hunting is one of the safest outdoor activities, and it's getting safer. Mike Blair photo



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

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Letters . . .

CARBON DEBATE

Editor,

I'm curious to know the means by which Mr. D. Shaffer earns his living (letter to the editor, November/December 2009 issue). It appears to be somehow associated with sizeable production or use of fossil fuel. Regardless of where on the planet the source of excessive carbon emissions originate, the planet is harmed until the carbon is sequestered by plant tissue. "Well, China gets to" (Mr. Shaffer's leaking) is not sufficient justification for this or any country to proceed with polluting the atmosphere.

For several years, the largest and most politically active farm organization promoted cap and trade as a means for Kansas farmers to increase profits. But since the Republican Party leadership denounced cap and trade as it interferes with revenue generated from fossil fuel production and use, the organization's top officials had to reverse their previous good advice. How can carbon sequestration not be a beneficial practice? – apparently when no money can be made by doing so.

Legislation that promotes or requires carbon sequestration is not bad legislation in any twist of logic that nay-sayers might postulate. Add-ons that promote conservation/preservation of other resources – so much the better!

*Paul Babcock
Hoxie*

HOOK-BEAKED PHEASANT

Editor:

I am enclosing a picture I took of a rooster pheasant I harvested in Sherman County on November 16, 2009. As you can see, he has quite an extension to his upper bill.



What could have caused this abnormality? Calculating by the length of its spurs, I would guess that this bird was from this year's hatch, but it was approximately three-quarters of a pound less in weight than normal. Examining the amount of dirt inside the beak, I would

HUNTING HERITAGE

with Wayne Doyle



Time To Reflect

As you read this, we are in that awkward time between the end of one hunting season and before the next. It is a time for both reflection on past hunts and anticipation of future hunts. The turkey that just would not come in last spring, will this spring. The pheasants that got up in front of everyone else will get up in front of you next fall.

We can reflect on the beginnings we took part in – the boy who entered the tradition of the hunt and the pup that discovered all that running around had a purpose. To watch Mike Miller's Brittany pup, Trip, go from uncertainty to the first glimmer of the wolf in him, to see him sniff the air first out of curiosity, then with purpose: Is he perfect? No. But wait until next year. Daisy, an ungainly pup a year ago, is a full-fledged hunting machine now. The wolf has kicked in full force.

Being privileged to assist in the mentoring of a new hunter is a true joy. To watch the boy step toward manhood; to see the eyes of the predator begin to shine in him, and to see the recognition come that he knows that he is now a part of the natural world brings a satisfaction that cannot be described – only felt.

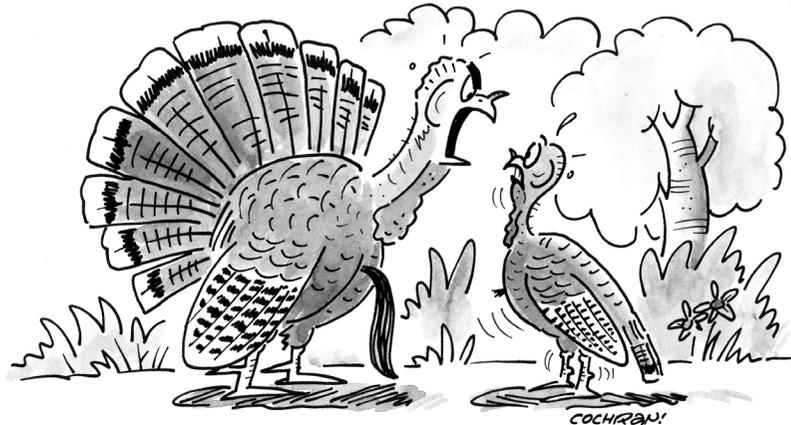
By reflection and anticipation, we must recognize that there are endings speeding toward us. A Brittany named Lucky, another beginning I was privileged to take part in, is now a decade older, and I see her winding down. The eyes of the wolf still shine, but the body that holds that great hunter is wearing out. My boy, Thor, while still in his prime and full of the wolf, approaches that downhill slope. I am not ready to anticipate that nor am I ready to even acknowledge it by starting another pup.

Reflection and anticipation also have to acknowledge that it's not just the dogs that are getting older. Recognition of this allows anticipation of changed hunting methods – no more carrying bags of decoys through the mud and adding a day or two of rest between hikes through CRP after pheasants.

Reflections and anticipation: it's what helps fill the time to next season.

WAY outside

BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"ARE YOU THE LITTLE JAKE WHO WAS TRYING TO GOBBLE THIS MORNING?"

Letters . . .

guess that it had plowed quite the furrow when attempting to eat, and this could account for the light weight.

I am genuinely interested in your thoughts on this matter. I am an ardent outdoorsman and avid reader of your magazine.

*Dave Tyrell
Hutchinson*

Mr. Tyrell,

All I can say is that deformities occur in all species, and this rooster has a significant one. I can imagine that it might have been hard for it to feed. Also, it's no surprise that it had dirt in its beak. It looks to me like the only way it could pick up grain was to scoop it up, getting a good helping of dirt. I expect, given the recent snow, that the hunter did this bird a favor. Otherwise, it was going to slowly starve to death.

*Randy Rodgers
wildlife biologist, Hays*

MAGAZINE RECRUITS KIDS

Editor:

A friend recently gave me a stack of your publications. Some were from 2005, and others from 2007. I took them to school (5th grade) and shared with my students. They love them!

I have a couple of boys in my class who enjoy trapping and hunting. One of these boys could grow up to pursue a career in parks and recreation. I have selected articles as assignments for my students to read. Who knows what your magazines will spark in them – hopefully, a love for nature, the outdoors and our fine state of Kansas.

Thank you for all your work and great articles!

*Susan Newby
Tyro Community Christian School, Tyro*

PURCHASE A COMBO LICENSE

Editor:

I really enjoyed your January/February issue. I appreciate especially your inclusion of the Arikaree Breaks. I have enjoyed them since I was a child and still find them a great place to spend an after-



Longer days and warmer temperatures have most Kansas bird watchers making plans for spring outings. At least two great opportunities will be available, with fun activities and guided field trips provided.

The 2010 Kansas Birding Festival at Wakefield is scheduled for April 23-25. This birding festival occurs in even-numbered years, alternating with the Wings-n-Wetlands Festival in Great Bend. This is the third year for the Wakefield event, and its popularity continues to grow. Milford Lake is the setting for most activities, with the United Methodist Church Community room serving as the base of operations. Organized activities include Friday afternoon field trips to the Milford Wetlands, the Kansas Landscape Arboretum, and area state and federal parks; a reception in Wakefield on Friday evening; more field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings; Saturday afternoon educational workshops; and a Saturday night banquet. State and local experts will be on-hand to serve as guides and to provide the educational sessions.

To learn more, go to: www.kansasbirdingfestival.org or contact Chuck Otte at the Geary County Extension Office (785) 238-4161, cotte@ksu.edu.

The spring meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society (KOS) will be held at Ringneck Ranch in rural Mitchell County, just south of Tipton, on May 14-16. This location will provide a great base of operations for a number of guided field trips to area birding hotspots, including Jamestown Wetlands, Lovewell Reservoir, Glen

BIRD BRAIN

with Mike Rader

Kansas Birding Festival

Elder Reservoir, Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge, Webster Reservoir and Wilson Reservoir. A Saturday night banquet will be part of the festivities. On-site lodging and banquet accommodations were full as this issue went to press. Others may participate in field trips but will have to make their own lodging and meal arrangements.

The KOS holds spring field trip meetings annually, and this is the first time focus has been on northcentral Kansas. Field trips are a great way to meet new people, see old friends and watch birds at some of Kansas' premier public properties. The date for this event is a little later than the traditional first weekend of May, and it may allow a few more neo-tropical migrant species to reach the area.

This event is open to everyone, not just members of KOS, but space is limited. Find more about the KOS spring meeting at www.ksbirds.org or by contacting Pete Janzen at pete.janzen@sbcglobal.net

Obviously, there are many other locations for excellent spring migration birding. Check out Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in central Kansas; parks and reservoirs in and around Wichita; Marais Des Cygnes Wildlife Area, Ft. Leavenworth and Baker Wetlands in the northeast; Schermerhorn Park and Mined Lands Wildlife Area in the southeast; and the Cimarron National Grasslands, Scott State Park and many state fishing lakes and public wildlife areas in the west. Waterfowl and shorebirds begin migrating in late winter through early spring, with the number of songbirds and other species peaking in late April and early May. It's a fantastic time of the year to get outdoors and see what the great state of Kansas has to offer.

Letter . . .

noon. They are one of Kansas' secrets.

Also, I would like to encourage all Kansas sportsmen and sportswomen to purchase a combo hunt/fish license - even if you only hunt or only fish. I very seldom make it fishing, but I feel that by purchasing the combo, my money supports all Kansas' sporting opportunities - especially for the kids.

Besides, at \$38.50, it's a bargain.

*Roger Jensen
St. Francis*

Mr. Jensen,

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Editor

PRONGHORN OR ANTELOPE

Editor:

While thumbing through the 2009 Kansas Hunting Atlas, I noticed "Antelope" on the Species Identification page. Having just returned from living in Montana, I have regularly debated whether antelope exist in the U.S. or whether people were actually referring to the pronghorn (sometimes called pronghorn antelope). This debate led me to research the topic, and most of what I can find reveals that antelope do not inhabit North America, with the exception of zoos or small non-native areas, and that people are actually seeing pronghorn.

I realize that nomenclature and regional vernacular play a role in the argument, but I am curious what stance Kansas Wildlife and Parks takes.

*Brad Johnson
Leavenworth*

Brad

You are correct if you call this creature a pronghorn and technically incorrect if you call it an antelope. KDWP biologists also call it a pronghorn.

KDWP frequently uses the term "antelope" when dealing with various audiences because the name is more commonly used in Kansas.

*-Lloyd Fox,
big game program coordinator,
Emporia*

IT'S THE LAW

with Kevin Jones

Learn New regulations

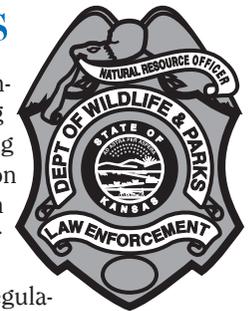
Spring is typically considered a time for new beginnings. Just as this is true in nature, so it is with hunting and fishing activity. The 2009 hunting and winter fishing seasons are behind us. The 2010 hunting seasons are upon us with the spring turkey hunt, and a new fishing season is taking off. Inevitably, with this new beginning for fishing and hunting will come changes in regulations.

A number of changes have occurred in the fishing regulations that affect creel and size limits, and legal fishing methods for the upcoming year. For example, length limits have changed for largemouth bass, walleye and wipers on El Dorado Reservoir. Trotlines and set lines are now prohibited on all department-managed impoundments smaller than 1,201 acres in size. Gizzard shad longer than 12 inches may now be taken with seines, traps, cast nets and fishing lines for fish bait. Bowfishing equipment may be used to take blue, channel and flathead catfish in waters where there are no size limits on any of these three species of fish. These are just some of the changes that have occurred that may affect your fishing this year.

As of this writing, there are no changes affecting the spring turkey season. However, the department does an annual review of the hunting regulations to address issues, problems and concerns, sometimes creating changes in the regulations. While a variety of regulations are brought before the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission through the year's meetings, it is during the January, March and April Commission meetings where the big game, fall turkey and upland bird seasons are discussed and potential changes acted upon.

The bottom line is that anglers, hunters, boaters and other outdoor enthusiasts need to be aware of the laws affecting their activity. It is not a good idea to assume the rules are the same from year to year. The best advice is to get a copy of the regulations and read them. They are available at license vendors, department offices and on-line through the department's website. The regulation summaries always include a page that highlights new regulations. If you have a question, contact the department and ask for assistance. Contact information and office locations are printed in the regulations summaries and on our website.

Everyone likes to have a good time outdoors, worry free with no problems. Taking the few minutes to check for changes in the regulations will go a long way toward enjoying a great time outdoors.



2010 FREE STATE PARK DAYS

KDWP has announced its schedule for 2010 Free Park Entrance Days, when anyone may enter individual state parks without a vehicle permit. (Camping and other permits are still required.) It's never too early to plan a trip or make a reservation for a campsite or cabin on dates when a park may offer free vehicle entrance combined with special events.

Special events planned in conjunction with Free Park Entrance Days differ from park to park. All of them make the park experience special. Each park is allowed two free entrance days, both on a single weekend or two separate days of the year.

For more information, contact individual state parks or click "Event Calendar" on the "State Parks" page of the KDWP website, www.kdwp.state.ks.us.

-KDWP News



HABITAT HELP with Jake George

The Importance of Grassland Disturbance

Grasslands, whether native or restored, require management to stimulate and maintain desirable species and optimum conditions for wildlife. Native grassland ecosystems evolved with grazing (bison, antelope, and elk) and periodic fire, which provided natural disturbances. These disturbances allowed the diversity of warm and cool-season grasses and forbs to be maintained. Changes to this disturbance regimen, including the elimination of fire and changes to the grazing frequency, combined with the introduction of non-native species has, in many cases, drastically altered the composition and health of native grassland habitats.

Without periodic disturbance, plant litter accumulates excessively on grasslands. This, in turn, reduces the amount of sunlight that reaches plant crowns near the soil surface. In this

scenario, shade-tolerant invasives such as Kentucky bluegrass and smooth brome grass are given a competitive advantage, causing an accelerated shift in plant species composition. Ultimately, plant and wildlife species diversity is greatly reduced.

There are many options for landowners who wish to maintain an appropriate disturbance regimen on their grassland. Common practices include strip disking, inter-seeding, prescribed burning and prescribed grazing. In most cases, cost-sharing is available for implementing these practices, whether done as a mid-contract management requirement for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or as a means to improve wildlife habitat on non-CRP properties.

When properly maintained, grasslands provide many wildlife species with a portion or all of their life requirements, including nesting, brood-rearing, roosting, escape, and feeding habitat. For more information on grassland management plans and cost-share options for improving wildlife habitat on your property, call 620-672-0760 and ask for the name of a KDWP private lands biologist in your area.

DeFisher's Honor Guard

On September 12, 2009, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks natural resource officer Kevin John DeFisher, 37, Lancaster, lost his 2 1/2-year-long battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife Jodie; parents, Frank and Pam; sons, Jason DeFisher, Tyler (Miranda) Donaldson; sister, Angela DeFisher; grandson, Trey Donaldson; maternal grandparents, Bob and Pearl McCord; paternal grandmother, Norma Kindler.

On September 17, 2009, another legacy of this dedicated game warden began with the first performance of the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Honor Guard. As the sound of the 21-gun salute and taps echoed in the afternoon air, the memorial service for Kevin ended along the bank of the Missouri River in Atchison, fitting for a man who loved the outdoors and being on the water. An honor guard unit comprised of 11 volunteers from across the state had assembled to pay last respects to a man who had served as a game warden for the last seven years in Atchison County.

It was Kevin's request last spring to have a department honor guard perform at his funeral. Kevin became a game warden in 2001, calling his dad to tell him he had just got his dream job. Assigned to Atchison County, Kevin took his responsibilities seriously. He had a knack for boating law enforcement and went on to become the boating specialist for northeast Kansas. His efforts won him the 2007 National Boating Safety Officer Of the Year Award through the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

But Kevin's sense of public service drove him to do more,

and he worked with the Atchison County Search and Rescue Team. A trained EMT, Kevin was always willing to give back to his community. His fire and rescue coworkers were more than just business associates; they were his friends, sharing time hunting, fishing and socializing.

The Honor Guard is designed to provide a specially-trained ceremonial team to render honors, preserve tradition, and to foster pride in the department. An honor guard should exhibit respect and honor on behalf of the department's law enforcement officers at all functions in which it represents the agency. The KDWP Honor Guard is committed to providing a specialty unit that brings precision and professionalism to various forms of ceremonial functions.



Training began immediately after Kevin's request with help from the Kansas Highway Patrol's Honor Guard leader Rob Estes. Master Trooper Estes served in Iraq and received a bronze star for his service. His years of experience with the Kansas Highway Patrol's Honor Guard was a great asset for Wildlife and Parks Law Enforcement staff as they assembled their unit. Once assembled, KDWP's group began practicing, then it practiced more, drawing from knowledge and experience of its own members. Uniforms and equipment gathered to be ready for the call.

Although Kevin is gone, his time with our department will be memorialized by an Honor Guard that was created on his request and will carry on his legacy, serving at ceremonial functions and funerals for present and retired officers. Kevin's wife Jodi said her husband loved his job and wished he could be a game warden forever. The Wildlife and Parks Honor Guard will forever be DeFisher's Honor Guard.

— Capt. Rob Ladner, Region 2 Office, Topeka

FRONTIER REFINERY RECOGNIZED FOR PARK DONATION

One of Kansas' largest and most popular state parks just got better, and one of its campgrounds got a new name. El Dorado State Park, located on the shores of El Dorado Reservoir just northeast of El Dorado, received infrastructure improvements even though its budget couldn't accommodate such work. A team effort from local volunteers, area businesses, and the Friends of El Dorado State Park took a generous donation from Frontier Refinery and tripled its value. The campground is now officially named Frontier Refinery Campground.

Improvements included adding sewer hookups, upgrading electrical hookups and installing a heating system in the showerhouse. The campground is within the Walnut River Area, which is below the dam, along the Walnut River. The picturesque recreation area is popular and conveniently located just 2 miles from the city. The specific campground is busy during the regular summer months but has been closed in winter because the facilities weren't heated.

Camp hosts Virgil and Virgie Schowalter came up with the idea for the project. The Schowalters knew there was demand for more winter camping sites - not from regular weekend campers, but because local companies, such as Frontier, bring in contract workers to complete specific maintenance during the winter. There can be more workers than available motel rooms, and workers can save money by staying in RVs at the park. The Schowalters saw the potential for increasing camping receipts at a time when the park traditionally had few campers.

The Schowalters contacted local businessman and state legislator John Grange. Grange owns and operates Carlisle Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc. in El Dorado and has served in the Kansas House since 2005. Grange has worked with KDWP through various legislative committees, and he was very interested in a project that would benefit the park, as well as the community. Grange made some calls to get community members on board.



"Through a public/private partnership, we were able to take a generous donation of \$24,000 from Frontier Refinery and turn it into park improvements that would have cost more than \$75,000," said Grange at a ceremony last December dedicating the campground's new name, Frontier Refinery Campground. The ceremony was attended by Bill Kloenlen, spokesperson for Frontier, as well as other Frontier staff, park staff and KDWP Secretary Mike Hayden.

The donation was turned over to the park's friends group, Friends of El Dorado State Park, and the project took off. Local businesses, including Big "A" Electrical Supply, Blackburn Construction, Ace Hardware, Heartland Monument, and Carlisle Heating and Air Conditioning made the project possible by donating or providing materials at cost and by donating labor. Schowalter, an electrician by trade, donated his time completing the electrical work, which consisted of upgrading the hook-ups from 30-amp breakers to 50-amp breakers. Local contractor John Schumaker donated much of the dirt work for sewer lines, as well.

The campground hosted contract workers during a time of the year when the campground was normally closed. The park benefits with increased revenue, the community benefits, workers benefit, and this summer, traditional park users will enjoy improved facilities.

"This is clearly a win-win effort for the state park and the community," Grange added. "I'd like to challenge other Kansas communities with state parks to explore similar partnerships and projects."

— KDWP News

2010 Mobile Aquarium Schedule

The KDWP Mobile Aquarium is 40-feet long and holds 3,200 gallons. At events across the state, the aquarium displays many Kansas sport fish and nongame fish, including largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, spotted bass, white bass, striped bass, hybrid striped bass (wiper), bluegill, green sunfish, longear sunfish, channel catfish, blue catfish, flathead catfish, buffalo, common carp, walleye, sauger, saugeye, redear sunfish, black crappie, white crappie, longnose gar, spotted gar, and freshwater drum.

The Mobile Aquarium will be on display at the following events in 2010:

March 6-7 — AMBUCS Family Leisure Living and Sport Show, Salina Bicentennial Center;

May 14-15 — Wichita River Festival, 520 W. Douglas, Wichita;

July 29-Aug. 1 — Finney County Fair, Garden City; and

Sept. 10-19 — Kansas State Fair.

For information on reserving the KDWP Mobile Aquarium for an event in 2011, contact Tom Lang at 620-672-5911.





On The Web with Mark Shoup

HABITUDE FISHING REPORTS

Habitude

If you have read about the alligator that was found in Coffey County Lake last January, you may have discovered a useful website for aquatic pet owners. If not, you should check out www.habitattitude.net, the website for Habitattitude. This is “a site for aquarium hobbyists, backyard pond owners, water gardeners, and others who are concerned about aquatic resource conservation.”

The site’s primary focus is how to deal with unwanted aquatic life that has been kept domestically and things to consider before you engage in such a hobby. There are also links to a variety of information sources on topics such as the latest news about invasive species, how to release aquatic plants and animals, the effects of improper release of such species on humans and the environment, the economic effects of exotics in the wild, and much more.

If you’re concerned about Kansas – and the nation’s – natural aquatic resources, educate yourself. Visit Habitattitude today.

KDWP Fishing Reports

As the weather warms, anglers are drawn to the state’s waters, and there’s no more useful tool than KDWP’s weekly lake-by-lake fishing reports. While these reports complement the fishing forecast, posted on the agency website each February, they provide more timely information for the angler wanting to know where the fish are biting.

Updated weekly by KDWP fisheries biologists, these reports provide the latest ratings on fishing conditions at many department-managed lakes in the state. Information includes a general rating of what the fishing is like – from poor to excellent – as well as the size range of fish being caught and information about best baits, methods, and loca-

tions. This detailed information is included for most species of sport fish in each lake. Water temperatures and lake elevations may also be included, along with other useful information and tips biologists think may help.

In addition, a blog entitled “Public Fishing Reports” enables anglers to provide timely reports and tips local biologists may not have heard about. Combined with the fishing forecast and the biologists’ weekly fishing reports, the public fishing reports provide the most complete picture of angling conditions short of being on the lake.



FISH SQUEEZER

with Tommie Berger

Creel Clerks Provide Valuable Service

April, May, and June are three of the busiest fishing months of the year – warm months when most of our warm water fish species are in the shallows following the urge to spawn, and anglers are anxious to get outside. Keeping track of when anglers fish and what they catch is part of every biologist’s job. To get that information, we conduct creel surveys.

While April, May and June are the popular fishing months, the ice thaws in March, so that’s when we start our surveys. Creek surveys are conducted at least once every five years and more often if we have some type of special project going on. Most creel surveys last for eight months, ending in October. Once in a while, we run a winter creel survey or we may run creel surveys on some of our trout waters from October 15 through April 15.

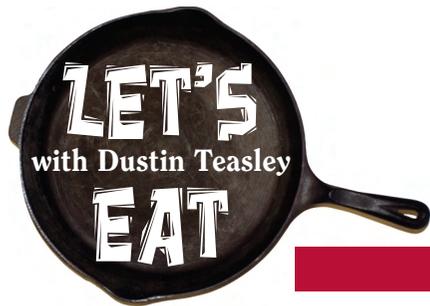
Creel surveys help us gather information on fish harvest, angler use, angler preferences, and other data that we can use to evaluate special projects and make management decisions. We hire temporary creel census clerks to gather the data. Clerks drive the length of the lake or reservoir counting and interviewing anglers on both weekend days and weekdays. Creel census periods last for four hours on reservoirs and two hours on smaller lakes. Some reservoirs are large and divided in survey units, and some may have as

many as three units. Many of you may have already had some experience with creel clerks in the past.

The information is gathered on a small hand-held computer. Anglers are asked a variety of questions so the clerk can determine how long anglers have been fishing, how many in the party are actively fishing, what they are fishing for, whether or not they have caught any fish, and how they would rate their fishing that day. The creel clerk then measures any fish that were caught and records them. Fish caught and released are also recorded. All this data is beamed to our Emporia office where it is placed into a bigger computer, month by month. At the end of the season, the data is tabulated and expanded for the entire eight-month fishing season.

This year, creel surveys will be conducted on Wilson, Melvern, and Big Hill reservoirs. La Cygne Reservoir has been running a winter creel survey that will be finishing up in March. Creel surveys will also be run on six state fishing lakes: Jewell, Clark, Scott, Douglas, Kingman, and Woodson.

It’s important that anglers cooperate with these surveys and provide all the information requested. The information will be used to better manage those lakes and hopefully improve your fishing success. Creel clerks will have copies of the current fishing regulations, the fishing atlas, and fish identification pamphlets for anglers. They will certainly know if and where the fish are biting and should be able to provide some valuable fishing tips or at least tell you where to try your luck. Just don’t expect them to talk too long because they will be on the move, making sure they get everyone counted and conduct as many interviews as possible.



SMOKED TROUT

One of my favorite ways to prepare trout is smoking them. I generally keep larger trout caught through the season for smoking. It's labor-intensive and time consuming, so I smoke more than a couple at a time. Keeping possession limits in mind, I like to have eight or ten trout on hand. Larger fish make finding and removing bones easier. The lower heat associated with smoking does nothing to disintegrate any bones in the fish.

When preparing fish to smoke, field dress and freeze them. Removing scales is easier when the fish are partially frozen, and scales help reduce freezer burn. I freeze cleaned fish wrapped in Saran Wrap or a zipper bag filled with water.

To prepare for smoking, scale the fish, rinse and set aside. Mix Morton sugar cure with water at a rate of one-cup sugar cure per gallon of water in a suitable container.

Make enough solution to cover the fish and soak in the refrigerator for 12 to 24 hours. If you don't have a container large enough to do this, use a cleaned ice chest. Make sure to keep ice in the solution while soaking.

Prepare the smoker by setting the heat to 160 degrees. Let the heat stabilize in the smoker. Fish is done at 140 degrees. Twenty degrees above the desired meat temperature is sufficient. No need for smoke yet.

Prepare the fish by tying a cotton string around the head for hanging. Hanging meat promotes even cooking and saves space in smoker. Keep fish separate while hanging. Insert a cabled digital thermometer into one of the fish to monitor the temperature without opening the smoker. Once the internal meat temperature reaches 90-110° add the smoke chips.

Cold meat prohibits smoke from penetrating and causes the outer portions to retain a harsh flavor. Warm meat allows smoke to move through the meat. Continue to smoke until the internal meat temp reaches 140 degrees.

Once smoked, debone the fish, vacuum seal, and freeze what is not immediately eaten. Frozen bags of fish can be reheated by placing in boiling water for a few minutes, and it will taste just like it did the day it was smoked. Shelf-life of frozen vacuum-sealed meat is about 6 months, 4 to 6 weeks in zipper bags.



It's best to hang trout by the whole head rather than the lower jaw (shown above). It WILL pull out and you will be left with a pile of fish at the bottom of the smoker.



FISHIN' with Mike Miller

GET READY

The longer I fish, the more important preparing to fish becomes. I suppose anglers go through various stages just like hunters – the shooters, baggers, trophy hunters, and method hunters. For anglers, the stages would be casters/catchers – cast a lot and catch a lot, of any size; limit catchers – the angler has to catch a stringer-full or a creel limit of legal-sized fish; trophy anglers – big fish and lots of 'em; and method anglers, which means the kind of fish, the way they are caught, and perhaps where they are caught become the focal points.

I still love to catch fish, but the tackle and the method I use is critical to my enjoyment. For example, I love to catch small-mouth bass, but I really like to catch them on light tackle from Lake of the Woods in northwest Ontario. My preferred method is spinning tackle, light line and jigs or tubes. There is a learned skill to this technique that makes the catch much more satisfying.

I love to catch big Kansas crappie, and my preferred method is called doodlesocking. This technique involves wading in and around flooded brush, and "hunting" the right

combination of depth and brush or cover. You drop the jig into the opening, "pop" it up and down a couple of times, then wait for the "bump." There is satisfaction feeling the weight of a slab crappie as you raise up with the long rod, trying to pull the fish out of the brush before it breaks off or pulls free.

Being a true method angler involves preparation. One of few times I remember being disappointed after a fishing trip was when poor preparation kept me from taking advantage of a wonderful fishing opportunity.

So get ready. Good fishing is just around the corner. Take inventory of your tackle so you know what you have and what you need. I enjoy inventory and usually discover some lures bought last year, tucked into a side pocket of my tackle bag, then forgotten. It's like a treasure hunt!

Next, inspect rods, reels, and line guides. Reels should be cleaned and lubricated, and line guides should be inspected for rough spots and grooves that might abrade line.

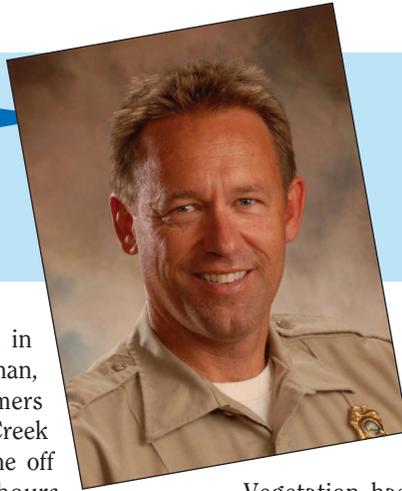
Replace monofilament. You can get more than a season out of braids and super filament lines, but mono will need to be replaced. I never empty the spool when changing mono. I strip off a little less than half, tie new line in with a double Uni-knot and add new line.

I can always while away a number of cold winter evenings getting my "stuff" ready. After inventory, it's time to replace stuff lost or broken last year. Trust me, you'll enjoy yourself more and be more successful if you prepare now.

PROFILE:

With Mark Shoup

ROB RIGGIN



A Grandmother's Legacy

Rob Riggan has eastern Kansas in his blood. Born in Emporia and raised in the rural Flint Hills near Chapman, where he went to high school, Riggan spent his summers working on the family farm near Herrington. Diamond Creek ran near the property, and when it rained, it meant time off from work and time on the creek, where he spent hours hunting, fishing, and simply flipping rocks to see what he could find. This background, and a very special grandmother, would benefit not only Riggan but Kansas wildlife and those who love it.

"When I was little boy, I collected *Outdoor Life*, *Field & Stream*, *Kansas Wildlife* – just about every outdoor magazine I could get my hands on," Riggan recalls. "I was always the kid who flipped over rocks or walked a mile to fish a farm pond. But my grandmother was the most remarkable influence on me in those days. She would take me out into the Flint Hills and teach me to identify wildflowers and take me froggin' and fishing. She was in tune with the natural resources. It's amazing to me now that I think back on it. That's pretty unusual, I think."

The combined experiences of growing up in the hills, being taught about them by his grandmother, and hunting and fishing with his father led Riggan to a career in wildlife management – eventually. After graduating from high school, he went to Emporia State University, where he majored in business with a minor in biology. After graduation, he spent nearly two years working in the business world.

"I just couldn't find a job I liked in business," he explains. "I already had a minor in biology, so I decided I should go back to school and get a degree in wildlife biology."

While studying the field of his heart, Riggan found part-time work at KDWP's Research & Survey Office in Emporia.

"I did a lot of phone surveys and worked with Keith Sexson (big game biologist at the time) aging deer incisors," says Riggan. "I also worked as a naturalist at Elk City State Park and as a temp in law enforcement."

Riggan completed his second degree in 1990 and continued working temporary jobs for KDWP until he was hired full-time in 1991 as a conservation worker at Neosho Wildlife Area. It seemed like a long "wait" for a full-time job, but Riggan had encouragement.

"Doug Blex was a real inspiration for me," he explains. "He was field supervisor at Elk City Wildlife Area, and he was the one who hired me as a naturalist. I was wildlife-oriented but unsure if I wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement, research, or public land management. I could see how much Doug loved his work, and it rubbed off on me. I remember that he was nice enough to let me tag along in the field as he completed law enforcement and natural resource management jobs. He just took the time to spend with me beyond my position description. And I looked up to him because he did his job so well."

Riggan held the Neosho job until 1997, when he was hired as Mined Land Wildlife Area manager, the position he still holds.

"Fifty years ago, this area was considered a wasteland, but today, mined land is highly sought for its clear waters and topography, and the privately-owned areas are the most expensive properties around.

Vegetation has matured, and most of the strip-mine lakes are clear, beautiful fishing spots. It's a real gem."

But good land managers are also good people managers. "People come from all around, and I like working with them. I have an open-door policy and really enjoy working with people, especially youth. I've been around here several years now, and I don't know what else I'd rather do. There's always something new to grab my interest."

"I wonder in the long-term if people are going to hunt, fish, and trap," he says. "That's why I'm so involved in youth programs. I want to help ensure that we'll have that constituent base in 50 years."

One of Riggan's most challenging projects for the near-term is acquisition of a portion of the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, near Parsons. After 57 years, the Army will cease operations, and 3,000 acres of prime hunting land will be transferred to KDWP, likely under Riggan's management.

"We hope to have this transfer complete by summer," Riggan explains, "but it's going to be a challenge to manage. It's known for trophy whitetails, and we'll have restricted use, much like the Army has for several years."

In addition to this new property, Riggan is responsible for 16,000 acres of wildlife habitat, including Mined Land, Harmon, Spring River, and Shoal Creek wildlife areas. All this comprises 152 miles of boundary that must be maintained, including fencing, signing, and law enforcement.

"Law enforcement is a minimum of 10 percent of my job. I take deer season very seriously, and I've made some pretty interesting cases over the years. My job also includes wildlife studies, including bobcat genetic sampling, dove banding, fish sampling, restoration of fescue areas back to native grasses, and dove habitat plantings.

"And youth hunts are one of the highlights of my career," Riggan adds. "Outfitters and landowners who want antlerless deer harvested love to help up with these events, and they really put on a show for the kids."

When asked to summarize his career, Riggan doesn't hesitate: "I'm very pleased with my choice of career. I've never looked back. I've had a chance to work with a diversity of very interesting people. I love being involved with every aspect of the agency. Kansans sometimes take what we have for granted, but when I visit with nonresidents, they are amazed at our resources, and it reminds me of how special Kansas is."

Special, indeed. And all the more so, perhaps, because of one very special grandmother.

HUNTING SPOTS

with Marc Murrell

LOOKING FOR A GOOD SHED

Warm spring days find all of us longing to get outside after a long winter. Even when no hunting seasons are open, there are “excuses” to head to your favorite hunting spot. Scouting for the upcoming turkey season is legitimate. Finding the mother lode of morel mushrooms is a good one, too. And the diehards still in deer mode will walk miles through the woods and fields looking for shed antlers. To a deer hunter, a shed antler is a treasure, but it’s also an indicator that a particular buck has survived another year, boosting the hunter’s confidence and optimism for next season.

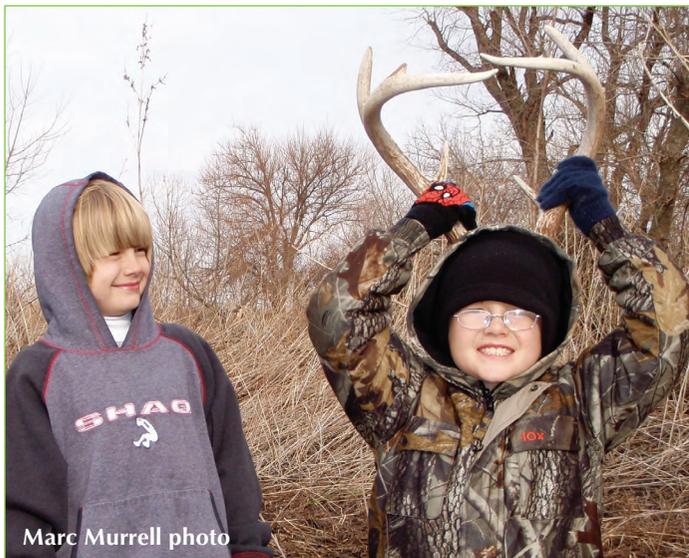
Kansas has rules concerning deer carcasses and shed antlers according to Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks officials.

“Shed hunting is popular,” said Mark Rankin, assistant director of Law Enforcement Division for KDWP. “We get a lot of calls, and our field officers make contact with people out looking for sheds.”

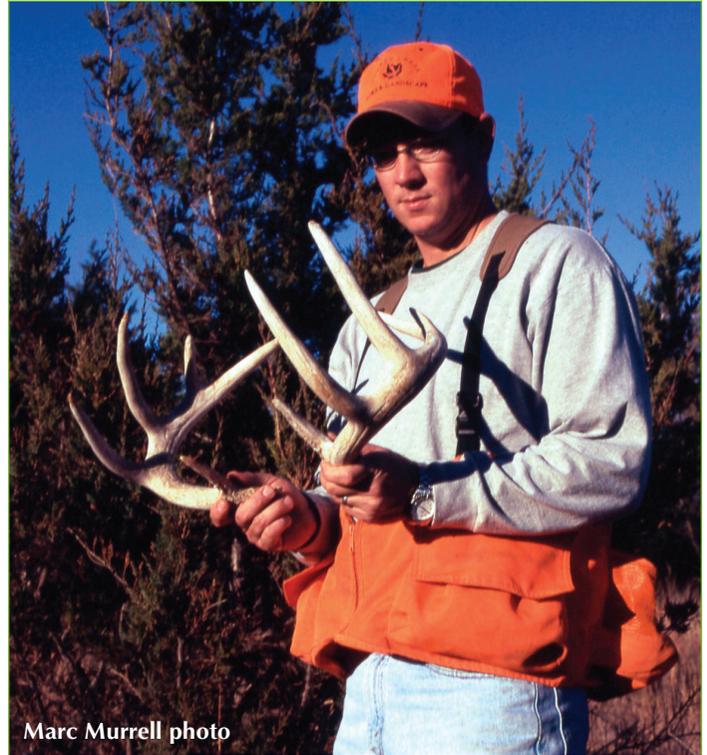
Rankin thinks the interest in shed hunting lies in the animal itself.

“I think whitetails, or all deer in general, are popular animals, and there are people really attracted to those antlers,” Rankin explained.

Kansas law states anyone can pick up and possess a shed antler. They must have permission to access private land. State-owned wildlife management areas are open to shed hunting although refuge restrictions may still be in effect. It’s a good idea to check with the local KDWP office.



Marc Murrell photo



Marc Murrell photo

“As long as they’re detached from the skull plate and a true shed antler, people can pick those up,” Rankin said. “You can sell any part of legally acquired wildlife except the meat, so if they wanted to collect and sell sheds they could do that.”

If someone happens upon the carcass of a buck with antlers, the regulations are different than for those of shed antlers.

“If the antlers are attached to the skull plate, they must be tagged before they can be removed,” Rankin stated. “They would need to contact a department employee or officer to get a salvage tag before they could move the deer or remove the antlers.”

Bucks begin dropping antlers as early as late December, but the majority won’t be shed until late February. Shed hunting is a great way to spend a warm early-spring day outdoors, and you can learn about deer movements on your hunting area. Every shed antler picked up is prized, but a truly large antler will be a guarded treasure and conversation piece. There’s no secret to finding them – just get out and get walking.

PARK VIEW



with Kathy Pritchett

What's UP!

Each year, the president of the Kansas Recreation and Park Association has the opportunity to present a special award to someone who plays a significant role in providing a positive influence on KRPA or who has played a positive role in the career development of the president. This year, without hesitation, President Betty Zeka selected Jerry Hover, Parks Division director for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

"In the two years I served on the KRPA board of directors with Jerry, I realized how valuable he is to KRPA and the state of Kansas," said Zeka. Citing his 45 years of service to the parks and recreation industry, including more than 16 years in Kansas, Zeka presented Hover the award, a well-kept surprise, at this year's KRPA Convention in Topeka. Hover has not only helmed state parks in Kansas and Utah, he has served as president of the National Association of State Park Directors and serves on the KRPA Board of Directors. He was instrumental in the development of and served on the faculty and Board of Regents of the National Association of State Park Director's State Park Leadership School. As Secretary Hayden's designee, he co-chairs the Kansas Coalition for Children in Nature.

It is illegal for children under the age of 14 to ride in the beds of pickups and on boats and personal watercrafts that are being towed on land to and from boat ramps. Each year, state park rangers issue warnings and citations in the effort to prevent tragic accidents that can result from these actions. So this season, if you have kids riding in the back of the pickup or sitting on the PWC en route to the boat ramp, even if it's just a few yards, count on having a talk with the park officer. He or she is not trying to ruin your fun but to preserve it by keeping everyone safe.

Two Park Division officers graduated and two more completed their first year of the National Association of State Park Director's State Park Leadership School. NRO Dustin Ward of El Dorado State Park and NRO Greg Mills of Scott State Park tied for third in this year's graduating class. The two-year certificate program was developed by the National Association of State Park Directors to pass on the knowledge they have amassed during their careers to managers just starting out. Kansas State Parks Director Jerry Hover was instrumental in founding and instructing at the school. All four Kansas State Park graduates have been in the top 1 percent of the class.

Coffey County Alligator

On Jan. 27, a group of anglers were fishing near the warm-water discharge in Coffey County Lake when they spotted an unexpected wildlife specimen – a 5-foot, 4-inch alligator. Fortunately, the grizzled reptile was dead, so the anglers netted the critter and notified lake authorities, who called Jason Goeckler, aquatic nuisance species specialist for KDWP.

"Alligators do not survive Kansas winters," Goeckler said, "so this big guy was likely released by someone and then found refuge in the warm water of Coffey County Lake. We have no way of knowing how long it has been there. Lake staff estimate the animal to be 6-8 years old, but we can't confirm that or at what age it was released. What we can tell folks is that release of exotic wildlife such as this is irresponsible, illegal, and potentially dangerous to native species."

The escape or release of animals and plants from aquariums, terrariums, or ponds and water gardens is harmful to pets and native wildlife, but it is avoidable. KDWP recommends that instead of releasing unwanted pets – including alligators – owners should use one of the following alternatives: find a new home for the pet; contact a pet dealer for proper handling advice or for possible returns; give/trade with another aquarist, pond owner, or water gardener; donate to a local aquarium society, school, or aquatic business; contact a veterinarian or pet retailer for guidance about humane disposal of animals; or seal aquatic plants and animals in plastic bags, freeze, and dispose in trash.

—KDWP News

Cabin Fever Cure

KDWP offers more than 70 rental cabins – in 16 state parks and four wildlife areas – throughout the year. Many of these cabins feature all the comforts of home while providing access to the pleasure of parks and lakes across the state. But don't wait until the last minute to make a reservation; cabins fill up quickly, so reservations must often be made months in advance, especially for spring and summer visits.

Some cabins are handicapped accessible. For a list of all cabins, or to make reservations, click "Cabin Reservations" in the upper right-hand corner of the KDWP website, www.kdwp.state.ks.us. Prices vary depending on location, season, day of the week, and amenities. Weekly and monthly rates are available.



While there's no place like home, the scenic surroundings and affordable rental fees of KDWP cabins provide escape from the "cabin fever" of daily home and work routines. Some cabins feature amenities such as full bathroom with shower; kitchen with microwave, refrigerator, and cook-top stove; beds for as many as nine people; screened-in porch; fire ring; and barbecue grill. Heating and air conditioning, table and chairs, basic pots and pans, and table service for four are also offered at many cabins, making them all-season getaways. Cabins without water or full bathrooms are located near park shower houses.

—KDWP News

"ALIENS ON OUR SHORELINES"

THAT'S WILD
with Ken Brunson



This piece on wild Kansas deals with unwanted aquatic nuisance species. When I first went to work for our state wildlife agency 30 years ago, the only major nuisance aquatic species was the common carp, *Cyprinus carpio*. We went to great effort and expense to reduce or eradicate this prolific species. Much was made of the biomass, which this unwanted intruder reserved in the place of more desirable game fish. It's a sad fact that early fisheries managers introduced this species more than a hundred years ago. No consideration was made for negative ecological impacts. In the 1970s, we killed out watersheds and lakes in the interest of "rehabilitating" them because they had become choked with "rough" fish. Little did we know then that our concern, mostly about just common carp, would pale compared to current threats from exotic species. While we still have some commercial fishing operations focusing on controlling rough fish including common carp, the issue of problem species has mushroomed in recent years. How we wish we could return to those simpler days when we only had one or two exotic

species worry about.

In our Kansas Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan, the common carp is listed merely as one of 23 fish species under "Non-indigenous aquatic animals." It doesn't even make the list of the "Priority Species" of nuisance animals and plants. While some efforts continue to experiment with genetic strains designed to cause the common carp to reproductively self-destruct, for the most part we've given up trying to eradicate it. Other more pressing threats have popped up – many more. In fact, there are nine Priority Species of Aquatic Nuisance Animals. Bighead carp, black carp, and silver carp have moved in front of common carp as major concerns. Where the Asian clam, *Corbicula*, populated nearly every stream system in the state since the 1980s, the current menace is the zebra mussel.

The challenge in dealing with exotic nuisance species is daunting and requires unconventional optimism. Perhaps the biggest challenge is convincing a sometimes apathetic public that these nuisance species are serious threats to the existence of so much of what we value. This

can include anything from a quality lake fishery to a pristine stream with diverse native fish and mussels. At a time when so much attention is focused on the fairly obtuse issue of climate change, we face these serious threats now.

This was a simpler issue when my career began. It has magnified several times in the last three decades. I hope we have not become so complacent of bad news that we've lost memory of when our stream mussels only had pollution, dams, and over-harvest to deal with or when we had to contend only with common carp as the major fisheries concern. The Kansas Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan needs to be taken seriously if we want our fisheries resources to persist in a healthy condition. Read the plan at www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/content/search?SearchText=ans

Cold, Happy Kids

During the Jan. 1-10 extended whitetail firearm deer season, KDWP, in partnership with Claythorne Lodge, K&K Outfitters, and John's Sporting Goods, provided youth deer hunts for 12 young hunters – six on each of the two days – and accompanying adults. On Saturday, Jan. 2, and Saturday, Jan. 9, the hunters waited in blinds on private land overlooking areas that consistently attract good numbers of deer. Pre-hunt activities included a pizza lunch provided by John's Sports Center, safety instruction, and sighting in rifles before the hunts began at 1 p.m. each day. Hunter orange hats, vests, hand warmers, and hearing protection were provided for all hunters.

"These were the coldest days we've had in this area in 12 years," said Rob Riggan, Mined Land Wildlife Area manager. "I even asked the kids if they wanted to call the hunt off until next year, but not a one of them did. They all stuck it out and were happy about it. I'm glad they did because this type of hunt is a winning situation for all participants. The guides, lodge owners, and parents and grandparents have a wonderful time introducing the outdoors to these young hunters. The kids have an opportunity to hunt areas specifically managed for wildlife with excellent deer numbers, and the participating landowners benefit from the harvest of excess antlerless deer."

These opportunities require assistance from many. KDWP extends thanks to the owners of Claythorne Lodge and K&K Outfitters for the use of their hunting lodges, staff, and access to properties. In addition, several landowners allowed hunting access, including John Parsons, Sam and Frieda Lancaster, Hugh Sosebee, and Sam Bismuke.



—Rob Riggan, Mined Land Wildlife Area manager, Pittsburg

A Woman's Perspective

by Tina McFerrin

Over the years, many ladies have asked me how in the world I could shoot a deer. My response is never simple nor short. Actually, you could blame it on my dad, like a generational curse. I hunted upland game and waterfowl as a child. At first, I believe I was used more as a bird dog, walking the lowest points of a draw and fighting my way through plum thickets. But I remember the first time I was allowed to carry a gun. It was a .410. (I'm sure Dad didn't get much hunting done because he was too busy supervising.) How did I know these weekend outings would become a passion and turn into a love affair with the outdoors?

I have no idea how many birds I have shot over the years, but there is usually something I do remember and sometimes treasure about every outing. Like the time I tried to pull the truck up to pick up my brother and buried it in a washout. The closest house was more than a mile away; the wind was howling; it was so cold; and there was several inches of snow on the ground. I don't think he has forgiven me yet.

Many times we crawled on our bellies for what seemed like miles only to stand up at a pond and discover there were no ducks. I'm not sure if that was before they invented the portable blind or if we were just too poor to have one. But I am sure these are precious moments that will be stored in my memory forever, and they are priceless.

Twenty years ago when my husband asked me if I would like to try deer hunting with him, I hesitated, thinking of Bambi. How could you shoot Bambi? However, it didn't take long for the hunt instinct to take over and the challenge began. Am I competitive? Absolutely!

Deer hunting can be extremely challenging to those of us who are slightly afraid of the dark. (Slightly is putting it mildly.) My reservations about shooting a deer were soon replaced by questioning my sanity for waking up at 4 a.m. and putting on as many layers of clothes as possible, then making my way through a piece of ground I had never set foot on before in the dark. Have you ever tried to follow in someone's footsteps in an overgrown tree grove with one flashlight? I was so relieved to finally get to my stand and actually make it above ground. After all, what can harm you when you are 10 feet off the ground?

I will never forget this first deer hunt. It was amazing, not



because I harvested a huge buck or even a doe. What I really remember are things like quiet that a person can't describe. Sitting in that stand, I could hear nothing but the humming in my ears. Few people have experienced true silence. I am one of them. (Trust me, this was unexpected. I was raising twins, and I didn't know there was such a thing as total silence.)

Since that first year, I have found treasure in one particular thing about deer hunting – the simplicity of sitting in the woods. A tree stand is no longer required because my fear of darkness has been replaced by the love of listening to nothing but nature. I have seen some of the most beautiful sunrises. As the sun begins to rise, life around you stirs. The birds begin to chirp and sing. The squirrels run from tree to tree, stopping to chatter at you as if to curse you for invading their territory.

Last fall, I again enjoyed a peaceful hour or so. This time my memory is of a fading sun in the west. As I sat in a washout waiting for the deer to hit the wheat field, I looked around and was lost in my surroundings. It was as if everything in nature danced its own way on the red clay. The evergreens moved so graciously. The grass waved back and forth, and even the small blades of fallow wheat seemed to keep beat. The wind had been blowing all day but slowly gave way to silence, and the light also began to fade. Disappointed that I didn't see a lot of deer? Not at all. I felt so blessed to be

able to enjoy nature and some of the treasures Kansas has to offer.

Today, I am proud to say I have passed these traditions on to my kids, with help from Dad, who is now a grandpa. Although Dad doesn't deer hunt, he is an awesome guide when it comes to turkey hunting and still enjoys hunting upland birds. I can't wait for spring and perhaps another opportunity to hunt turkey with Dad, my "nature hero." And maybe I'll get him in the deer woods this fall and spread the "generational curse."



2010 Sportsmen's

TURKEY

2010 SPRING TURKEY

- Regular Season
(firearm/archery): April 14 - May 31, 2010
- Archery-Only Season: April 1 - 13, 2010
- Youth/Disabled Season: April 1 - 13, 2010

2010 FALL TURKEY:

- Season: Oct. 1-Nov. 30, 2010 and
Dec. 13-Dec. 31, 2010; and Jan. 10-31, 2011.

FISHING SEASONS

PADDLEFISH SNAGGING

- March 15-May 15, 2010
- Designated areas on Neosho and Marais des
Cygne rivers and Browning Oxbow Lake — see
2010 Fishing Regulations Summary for details.
special permit required.
- Daily creel limit: 2
- Season limit: 6

TROUT SEASON

- Oct. 15 - April 15, 2010
- Daily creel limit: 5
- Area open: Designated trout waters listed at
www.kdwp.state.ks.us

HANDFISHING

- June 15-Aug. 31, 2010 (flathead catfish only)
- Two locations: Arkansas River from John Mack
Bridge in Wichita downstream to Oklahoma
border and Kansas River from origin to conflu-
ence with Missouri River. Special per required.
- Daily Creel Limit: 5

BULLFROG

- July 1-Oct. 31, 2010
- Daily Creel Limit: 8

FLOATLINE FISHING

- July 15-Sept. 15, 2010
- Daylight hours only – Hillsdale, Council Grove,
Tuttle Creek, Kanopolis, John Redmond,
Toronto, Wilson and Pomona reservoirs only.

BIG GAME

DEER:

- Youth/Persons with Disabilities: Sept. 11-19
- Archery: Sept. 20 - Dec. 31, 2010
- Muzzleloader: Sept. 20-Oct. 3, 2010
- Early firearm (Subunit 19 only) Oct. 9-17, 2010
- Regular Firearm: Dec. 1 - Dec. 12, 2010
- Firearm Extended Whitetail Antlerless Season:
Jan.1 - Jan 9, 2011
- Archery Extended Whitetail Antlerless Season
(DMU 19 only): Jan. 10 - Jan. 31, 2011
- Special Extended Firearm White-tailed
Antlerless Season: Jan.10- Jan.16, 2011
(Open for unit 7, 8 and 15 only.)

ELK (residents only)

Outside Fort Riley:

- Muzzleloader: Sept. 1-Oct. 3, 2010
- Archery: Sept. 20 - Dec. 31, 2010
- Firearm: Dec. 1 - Dec. 12, 2009 and
Jan.1-March 15, 2011

On Fort Riley:

- Muzzleloader and archery: Sept. 1-Oct. 3, 2010
- Firearm Season for Holders of Any-Elk Permits:
Oct 1 - Dec 31, 2009
- Firearm First Segment: Oct. 1-Oct. 31, 2010
- Firearm Second Segment: Nov.1 - Nov 30, 2010
- Firearm Third Segment: Dec.1 - Dec. 31, 2010

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

DOVE (Mourning, white-winged, Eurasian col- lared, and ringed turtle doves)

- Season: Sept.1 - Oct. 31 and Nov 6-14, 2010
- Daily bag limit: 15
- Possession limit: 30

EXOTIC DOVE

(Eurasian collared and ringed turtle doves only)

- Season: Nov. 20, 2010 - Feb. 28, 2011
- Daily bag limit: No limit
- Possession limit: No limit

Calendar

RAIL (Sora and Virginia)

- Season: Sept. 1 - Nov 9, 2010
- Daily bag limit: 25
- Possession limit: 25

SNIPE

- Season: Sept. 1 - Dec. 16, 2010
- Daily bag limit: 8
- Possession limit: 16

WOODCOCK

- Season: Oct. 16 - Nov. 29, 2010
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

SANDHILL CRANE

- Season: Nov. 10 - Jan. 6, 2011
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

DUCK

- to be set

CANADA GEESE

- to be set

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

- to be set

LIGHT GEESE

- Conservation Order: Feb. 15-April 31, 2010

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

PHEASANTS

- Season: November 13, 2010 - January 31, 2011
- Youth Season: November 6-7 2010
- Daily bag limit: 4 cocks in regular season, 2 cocks in youth season

QUAIL

- Season: November 13, 2010 - January 31, 2011
- Youth Season: November 6 - 7, 2010
- Daily Bag Limit Quail: 8 in regular season, 4 in youth season

PRAIRIE CHICKEN

- Early Season (East Zone): Sept. 15-Oct. 15, 2010
- Regular Season (East and Northwest zones): Nov. 20, 2010 - Jan. 31, 2011
- Regular Season (Southwest Zone): Nov. 20, 2010 - Dec. 31, 2010
- Daily Bag Limit: 2 (Southwest Zone 1)
- Possession Limit: twice daily bag

SMALL GAME ANIMALS

SQUIRREL

- Season: June 1 - Feb. 28, 2011
- Daily bag limit: 5
- Possession limit: 20

RABBITS (Cottontail & Jack rabbit)

- Season: All year
- Daily bag limit: 10
- Possession limit: 30

CROW

- Season: Nov. 10 - March 10, 2011
- Daily bag/Possession Limit: No Limit

FURBEARER HUNTING & TRAPPING

NOTE: All furbearer hunting, trapping, and running seasons begin at 12 noon on opening day and close at midnight of closing day.

- Season: Nov. 17, 2010 - Feb. 15, 2011
Badger, bobcat, mink, muskrat, opossum, raccoon, swift fox, red fox, gray fox, striped skunk, weasel

BEAVER TRAPPING

- Season Dates (statewide):
Nov. 17, 2010 - March 31, 2011

Prairie Camping



text and photos by Bill Graham
Platt City, MO

No frills tent camping on our native prairie is a great way to connect with Kansas' grassland heritage. There are many natural areas for primitive camping at state parks and state fishing lakes, and early spring and late fall are the best times to enjoy them without competition.

Connection



Gentle peaks and swales seemed to hold a starry sky aloft as I warmed my back beside a campfire and pondered a new view of prairie.

Many times I've admired the sweeping vistas in Chase County's Flint Hills as I sped through on Interstate 35. I've also enjoyed walking in prairie grasses elsewhere in Kansas to hunt pheasants and quail. But

camping in a pristine prairie is more revealing and offers new sights: a majestic star canopy on a clear autumn night, with bright stars beaming even on the horizon's edge.

Light from our campfire at Chase County State Lake flickered dimly. House and street lamps from nearby Cottonwood Falls barely made a dent in darkness to our east. No light pollu-

tion blocked the starry view, making the Milky Way seem infinite and the grassy hills mysterious in starlight.

"You haven't had the full prairie experience until you see it at night," said Glenn Fell, a prairie naturalist. "You have to live in it to know it. You can't just drive through it."

Fell, his girlfriend Lisa Smith and her son, Matt, live in Emporia and they camp regularly at Chase County State Lake – in all the seasons. Most campers come for the 109-acre lake's fishing. But Fell comes with family and friends to hike on the 383-acres of high-quality Flint Hills prairie on the rolling hills surrounding the lake.

He's seen the fire-blackened slopes turn bright green in April with fresh grass. Then flowers such as the wild parsley's yellow blooms appear along with the lavender petals of rose verbena. Butterfly milkweed in varying shades of orange and yellow blooms as summer progresses, as do the pale purple coneflowers, blazing stars and many other wildflowers. The seed stems from the big bluestem grass are chest-high by late summer when sunflowers tint the prairie yellow.

On this campout, though, sunrise turned the hills reddish gold, showing the prairie grasses in their autumn blush.

"You can camp out here and marvel at the beauty," Fell said. "But then you can come back again later and it's transformed. It's the same place, but you have a whole different experience. The prairie is always changing."

Fell enjoyed forests in his native Massachusetts. Getting a masters degree in agronomy at Oklahoma State University intro-



Late fall and early spring are great times to explore primitive camping areas. The changing seasons provide a great backdrop, and there are no crowds to compete with. Most state fishing lakes allow primitive camping, and all state parks have primitive camping areas available.



Hiking over the hills near Chase County State Fishing lake is an ideal way to learn about the tallgrass prairie ecosystem. Kansans are fortunate to have abundant native grasslands still intact, including the Flint Hills, Smoky Hills, and Red Hills.

duced him to the plains, but he wasn't impressed with grasslands. He returned east to get a doctorate degree in soil science at Penn State University. But teaching agriculture and managing a farm for Mid-America Nazarene College in Olathe from 1990 to 2003 brought him back to prairie country.

In 1993 he wandered off the interstate highway onto Flint Hills back roads as he studied the Native American history of the Konza tribe. He took a close look at prairie for the first time and was smitten.

"That was a life-changing day

for me," Fell said. "I got connected to this place in a way I'd never felt before. Kansas changed for me."

Soon, Fell spent his spare time identifying grasses and wildflowers at the Prairie Center in Olathe, a 300-acre tallgrass preserve in Johnson County. He also worked to help establish the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve near Strong City, not far as the hawk flies from Chase County State Lake.

His fondness for prairie prompted Fell to establish Jubilee Native. His company offers guided hiking trips on prairie

lands, native plant landscaping services and sales of native plant seeds and seedlings. (For more information, he can be reached at glenn@jubileenative.com or by calling 913-961-6401.)

In the Flint Hills, Fell hopes in the future to develop guided camping and backpacking trips on prairie, perhaps on private ranches. But Chase County State Fishing Lake already serves the same purpose because it's bordered by hills with prime Flint Hills tallgrass prairie. Surrounding private grassland makes the public land central in a large ecosystem. Fell rarely sees



You may have the state park or fishing lake to yourself during an early spring or late fall camping trip. This is a great time to bring your four-legged camping friend.

another hiker in the hills away from the lake.

“There are no trails,” he said. “You just go out hiking and rough it. You see more that way, and you’re in a place where few humans ever go.”

Camping is free at the lake, which is managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Campsites are near the water and fishing jetties. Several sites have fire rings. We put our tents on higher ground to avoid mud and to be near the tallgrass.

There are drive-in camping locations that will accommodate recreational vehicles and tents alike. But no electricity, water or trash service is available. You pack out whatever you bring in. There is one restroom. Bring your own firewood.

We had the campground to ourselves on an early-November night. The blaze in the fire ring produced a warm place to sit and talk. Coyotes howling broke the quiet now and then, as did a great horned owl hooting in the

cottonwood grove at the lake’s upper end.

Smith grew up camping with her father in woodlands but Fell introduced her to prairie.

“It’s amazing how beautiful the prairie is,” she said, “and it doesn’t matter what season it is. Even in the dead of winter there’s something to see.”

Morning came and sunlight brought a glow to dew-moistened grasses.

Our hike into the grassy hills and limestone outcrops showed

us the growing season's fruits and some green holdouts from summer.

The dew-covered webs of black and yellow garden spiders sparkled in silver geometric patterns in the reddish grasses. Hardy spiders still held onto their webs, waiting to entrap more bug prey before crawling under rocks for winter.

Fell pulled Illinois bundleflower seeds from a dried stem and studied their shape in his hand. Then he did the same with blazing star seed and a Maximilian sunflower turned

brown by frost. Big bluestem and little bluestem seed heads shimmered in every small breeze.

"I like these pocket prairies," Fell said, pointing to grass tufts growing in holes in flat rocks, with iridescent lichens and mosses also clinging to life on stone.

At the bottom of the hill a small purple flower bloomed alone.

"It's the last verbena of the growing season," he said. "They bloom mostly in spring. But when the weather turns cool in autumn, some bloom."

Several Kansas state parks in

the Flint Hills and in the short-grass prairie regions farther west offer camping near prairies, and some have hiking or horseback riding trails.

Fell hopes more people take time to walk upon them and then linger. Camping lets you see prairie life in all seasons and all hours, revealing a natural system constantly changing, though the basic ecosystem is ancient.

"If you want to get the big picture of what prairie feels like, you have to come out here and connect with it," he said. "I think it's a national treasure." 🌿



The prairie will transform as spring turns to summer, and wildflower tours can be interesting and educational. There may be more competition on public areas as the weather gets warmer, but the lush grassland growth and wildflower views are often worth it.



Mike Blair photo

Making A Difference

by Wayne Doyle

statewide Hunter Education Program coordinator, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

videographer/photographer, Pratt

Volunteer instructors have certified more than 400,000 students in Kansas Hunter Education since it was required in 1973. Have we made a difference?

When evaluating any program, looking back is a necessary part of the process. It is hard to know where we are without looking at where we've been. This is true for the Kansas Hunter Education program, as well.

Hunting incidents are defined as injury or death caused by the discharge of a gun or bow while hunting. These incidents did not begin in 1973 when the Kansas Legislature passed the statute that required anyone born on or

after 1 July 1957 to pass a course in hunting safety.

It is likely that early hunters hurt or killed each other in the excitement of bringing down a mastodon. It is possible to find accounts of individuals being hurt or killed in hunting incidents as far back as the Plymouth and Jamestown colonies. The journals of Lewis & Clark report that on 11 August 1806, while on the return from the historic exploration, Meriwether Lewis was mistaken for an elk by one of

his men. He was hit in the buttocks by a .54 caliber musket ball. The wound, while painful, was not fatal.

Death and injury from firearm incidents were, unfortunately, fairly common in our frontier history. It is impossible to know how many were hunting incidents but since hunting was a major method of gathering food, it can be assumed that far too many individuals were hunting-related casualties. For our own statistics, we categorize these



Mike Blair photo

Author, statewide program coordinator and longtime hunter education instructor, Wayne Doyle, teaches students at a field day at the Pratt County Gun Club. The field day is a required part of the internet-assisted course where students complete four hours of internet course work prior to the six-hour field day where they will shoot shotguns, participate in field walks and handle a variety of firearms.

incidents even more specifically. Today, many historical incidents would be counted under the careless handling category. Undoubtedly, in the days before blaze orange, many, including Meriwether Lewis', would fall under the heading of mistaken for game – or more accurately described, failure to properly identify target.

In 1859, the War Department issued *The Prairie Traveler*, a handbook for those traveling west prior to the Civil War. It was written by Captain Randolph B. Marcy, U.S. Army. Marcy had 25 years of experience in the west. The book recommended many things — routes to travel, what to carry and how to load it in wagons and on horses, care of

animals, food, how to hunt various animals, and many other useful topics. His discussions of the proper firearms for defense and hunting include much about safety and the results of careless handling:

“The chief causes of accidents from the use of fire-arms arise from carelessness, and I have always observed that those persons who are most familiar with their use are invariably the most careful. Many accidents have happened from carrying guns with the cock down upon the cap.” [The modern equivalent of this is a firearm with a cartridge in the chamber and the safety off.] “Another source of many sad and fatal accidents resulting from the most stupid and cul-

pable carelessness is in persons standing before the muzzles of guns and attempting to pull them out of wagons, or to draw them through a fence or brush . . .” [The equally “stupid and careless” modern equivalent of this is the practice of carrying a loaded firearm in the vehicle in order to be ready to defend oneself against pheasants charging the truck.] “These accidents are of frequent occurrence, and the cause is well understood by all, yet men continue to disregard it, and their lives pay the penalty of their indiscretion. It is a wise maxim . . . Always look to your gun but never let your gun look at you . . . and another wise maxim — Never point your gun at another . . . and never allow

Mike Blair photo



Wingshooting instruction is a fun part of the field day. In recent years, hunting has become one of the safest outdoor activities. Hunter education programs are largely responsible for a dramatic reduction in firearm-related hunting incidents.

another to point his gun at you.” (Thanks to Michael Pearce for introducing the author to Captain Marcy’s delightful handbook.)

Entering the 20th century apparently did not have an appreciable affect on the general level of hunting safety. In 1908, an article in the *Iron River Pioneer* (Wisconsin) must be quoted to be believed. “There were no serious accidents this past deer season, although 44 hunters were killed and 57 injured. This number is still too high, but with an estimated 20,000 hunters and a definite lack of snow, the record was not too bad.” Makes you wonder what “serious” meant in 1908 doesn’t it? It’s hard to believe that dead isn’t a serious condition. And what difference do you suppose more snow would have made?

Eighty-six years later, Bart Halverson of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources projected the 1908 ratio of accidents

to the number of hunters expected for the 1994 Wisconsin deer season. Halverson projected that same ratio would produce 1,540 killed and 1,998 wounded hunters or 222 casualties per day or 22 per hunting hour or 1 every 90 seconds! Of course a blood bath of this magnitude did not take place, partly because of educational efforts that had been instituted.

In 1943, the Kansas Fish and Game Commission reported that 45 lives had been lost in firearms accidents during 1942, which was an increase of 14 over 1941 and 22 more than 1940. There was no report on the number of injuries. From 1911 to 1942, 1,811 individuals had lost their lives in Kansas due to careless handling of firearms. The number of hunters killed was not separated from this number but the 1942 count included 8 hunters killed. The article attributed “every cause can be basically charged to the care-

less handling of firearms.”

In 1949, New York and Kentucky instituted formal hunter safety courses. These were in response to the large number of returning World War II veterans who returned home with an increased interest in firearms. Many of these veterans took up hunting as a recreational opportunity, increasing the number of hunters in the field, which in turn increased the number of firearm-related incidents.

Hunter education is now required in every state and province in North America. The incident rate has dropped to statistically insignificant levels, although there is nothing insignificant about an incident to the victim or shooter.

The accompanying chart shows the incident rate trend over time, particularly since the 1973 adoption of the Kansas program. There is a downward trend throughout.

It should be noted that the apparent increases in the early 1980s are the result of law changes that mandated increased reporting requirements and increased number of hunters during the pheasant heydays of the time. In the last decade or so, the numbers have continually shrunk, producing numerous record low numbers of incidents. Particularly

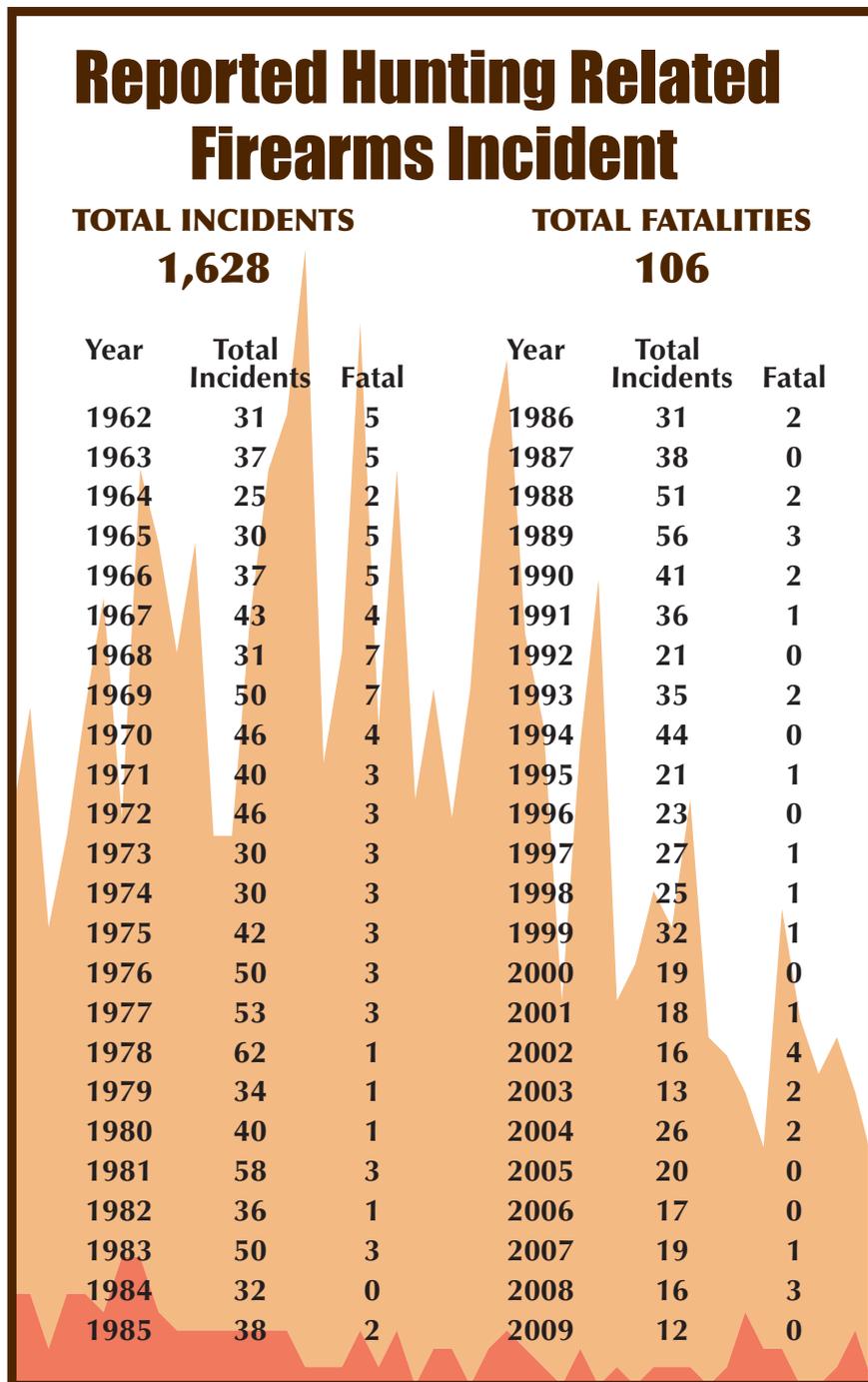
noteworthy are the number of years with no fatalities.

Another record was set in 2009; 12 incidents with NO fatalities in three and one-half million hunting days. We are headed in the right direction. The goal is ZERO. We are getting there.

In the last 10 years, many new technologies and techniques have been incorporated into hunter

education. Use of computers and specially designed software to present material in the same way that students experience in school has increased. The LaserShot Hunting Simulator presents real-world situations and shooting techniques to the classroom. More than 60 percent of the courses experience some form of live fire — mostly shotgun — and almost half experience an outdoor, hands-on gun handling experience known as a trail walk. An increasing number of internet-assisted courses are being offered that let the student complete a portion of the course on-line at their own pace. This is followed by a field day with instructors doing several gun handling exercises, live fire and a trail walk. Guns, ammunition, battery operated clay target traps, targets, computers, projectors, and archery equipment are just some of the gear available to instructors. A superb on-line furharvester course is proving to be an effective learning tool that is popular with budding furharvesters. This isn't your father's Hunter Education Program anymore!

Even with this modern equipment, almost all of the credit for these low numbers must go to dedicated hunters who volunteer to teach hunter education to aspiring hunters. Taking advantage of many new teaching techniques, these volunteer instructors give more than 20,000 hours per year to pass on the tradition of the hunt, make the Kansas prairie a safer place to hunt and to help build knowledgeable and responsible hunters. Without these volunteers, it's possible that Halverson's projected bloodbath would have come to pass. The next time you see a hunter education instructor, shake his or her hand and thank them. That would be reward enough. ♡





Marc Murrell photo

by Bob Roberts
Salina

We can't count on favorable weather in March, but if we're lucky, a few nice days are ahead. When they come, hitch the boat or grab your waders. Check the 2010 Fishing Forecast for a nearby lake with saugeye and see what you've been missing.

Marvin Cain and I were fishing Kanopolis Reservoir for late-winter crappies when he made a cast up to shallow water to get a loop out of the line on his spinning reel spool.

“Hey, I got a fish, and it’s sure doesn’t act like a crappie,” he announced.

The bend in his light spinning rod signaled that it wasn’t one of the 1-pound crappies we had been catching. This fish definitely had some shoulders. Soon we netted a 4-pound saugeye. We added it to the livewell that contained a dozen or so crappies. He quickly made a second cast to the same area.

After 15 minutes without additional strikes, we both switched from the crappie tubes to bigger swim baits. That was all it took to get the bite going again as the fish seemed to like the bigger baits better. In less than an hour, we had our limit of 10 saugeyes ranging from 3 to 6 pounds. We decided to check some other nearby areas just to see if they also contained feeding saugeyes. It took just a couple of casts in several other places to verify the presence of big saugeyes. After we caught and released close to another limit of fish, we were convinced we had a pattern on later-winter saugeyes.

Later that evening when we cleaned the fish, we found that all were females. The stomach contents contained gizzard shad up to 7 inches long and one even had a 5-inch white bass.

Several more Kanopolis trips over the following two weeks confirmed that big female saugeyes were on a feeding spree ahead of the spawning period. That was several years ago and since then, that early saugeye bite has been consistent except for the year the lake was well-below conservation pool level. Lack of usable boat ramps kept most anglers away from the lake, but anglers did catch a fair amount of fish from the

“I got another one on,” Cain yelled in amazement. I grabbed the net and soon we had added another nice fish in the 4-pound range to the livewell.

Cain moved the boat closer into the bank, and I made a cast to the same area and felt the sharp bite of a saugeye. This fish was like a carbon copy of the two Cain had caught.



Bob Roberts photo

The big female saugeye can be found feeding shallow soon after ice-out. While they look similar to walleye, the sauger/walleye hybrid normally won’t spawn. However, they still migrate to the walleye spawning areas in late February and March.

Anglers who are able to fish at the start of this bite often take stringers of saugeyes that average four pounds or better. The bite lasts from a week to two weeks for the big females. After the ladies have had their fill of bait fish, the smaller males move in.

As the spawn commences, fewer females will be caught, but the males will continue to feed throughout the spawn. Males up to 4 pounds are caught, but most will be in the 2- to 3-pound range.



Large plastic swim-type jig bodies are favored by the author. He feels the larger baits are more effective than smaller baits and produce bigger fish, as well.

shore that year.

After the ice leaves Kansas lakes in mid- to late February, and water temperatures reach the high 30s and low 40s, saugeyes move to shallow points and flats for a feeding spree ahead of the spawn. The big females are the first to show up, gorging themselves on gizzard shad and any other small fish that are available.

While there has always been a fair pre-spawn bite for walleyes in Kansas lakes, I believe there is a much better bite for saugeyes during this same period. These hybrids, a cross between a sauger and a walleye, tend to be more aggressive feeders than walleye during this pre-spawn period.

Over the past six years, most of the big pre-spawn females we've caught have been saugeyes. In fact some years, all the females we caught have been saugeyes. As the bite progresses into the spawn, male walleyes will be in the mix of the catch.

It's not easy to just "eyeball" the fish and tell a saugeye from a walleye. The coloration on saugeyes varies greatly depending on the water clarity. The simplest way is to touch the

cheek patch, which is scaled, or rough, on a saugeye but smooth on a walleye. A saugeye will also exhibit spots on the spiny dorsal fin. Walleye will not.

Saugeyes go through the spawning motions but, like most hybrids, have almost no chance of producing any offspring. However, the possibility of saugeyes crossing back with walleyes does exist. To protect pure-strain walleye populations, KDWP has limited saugeye stocking to just four reservoirs in the state: Council Grove, Kanopolis, Sebelius and Tuttle Creek. Several state fishing lakes and community lakes are also being stocked with saugeyes.

The early-feeding saugeyes can usually be caught on jigs. Crappie jigs will work, but over the years we've found that 4- to 5-inch rubber baits, called swim baits, rigged on eighth- to quarter-ounce jig heads will catch bigger fish. Crankbaits such as Rattletraps can be effective, especially when fish have moved into water less than 5 feet deep.

Jeff Ensz of Salina has fished Kanopolis Reservoir for several decades. When the ice goes out on the lake, he is after saugeyes almost on a daily basis. When the big females move up on the points, Ensz prefers 4- or 5-inch swim baits such as Zoom Flukes or Walleye Assassins rigged on an eighth- or quarter-ounce jig head.

"We use to just use crappie tubes, but when we switched to the bigger baits, we caught more and bigger fish", Ensz says.

He pours his own lead jig heads and prefers to use a 1/0 hook on both sizes.

"Its a bigger hook that comes back farther in the bait, and I have a better chance of getting a good hook set," he told me.

"Wind and depth determine whether I use a eighth- or quarter-ounce jig head. You have to have good feel and control of the lure to keep it right off the bottom. Windy days may put too much bow in my line and the smaller head doesn't give me a good sense of where my bait is, so I will go to the larger head," he advised.

Identification of Walleye, Sauger, and Saugeye

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has stocked sauger and saugeye (a hybrid of the walleye and the sauger) in federal reservoirs where walleye have not flourished. The sauger is native to large rivers like the Kansas and Missouri. Both sauger and saugeye are better adapted to high flow and turbid water than the walleye, and saugeye establish fishable populations below impoundments when flushed. Saugeye have also been stocked as an additional predator in small lakes with stunted crappie.

It is important that anglers be able to identify what type of perch (the family of fishes that includes walleye and sauger) they catch because length limits on walleye, sauger and saugeye can differ in a given body of water. The information below identifies key characteristics needed to identify these three fish.

WALLEYE

spiny dorsal fin with indistinct streaks or blotches

dark blotch at rear base of spiny dorsal fin

cheeks with few scales (smooth)

blotches on sides indistinct and not extending far below the lateral line



SAUGER

spiny dorsal fin with distinct circular spots

no blotch at rear base of spiny dorsal fin

cheeks with few scales (rough)

blotches on sides dark, distinct and extending below the lateral line



SAUGEYE (hybrid)

spiny dorsal fin with distinct streaks often with one or two rows of spots at base

dark blotch at rear base of spiny dorsal fin

cheeks with scales (rough)

blotches on sides dark, distinct and extending below the lateral line



Artwork by Joseph R. Tomelleri





Marc Murrell photo

The statewide length limit for walleye, sauger and saugeye is 15 inches. However, some lakes may have 18- or 21-inch minimum length limits. The daily creel limits for the three species applies to single species are an aggregate collection.

Most of the time he will cast out and work the lure slowly along the bottom with a lift and drop action. Most fish are caught in 4 to 12 feet of water.

"Sometimes you can see them on your depth finder in the deeper water and catch them vertically jigging the swim baits," Ensz says.

Lure color is a factor, and some days Ensz will change frequently until he finds what the fish are hitting best. Water clarity and light levels are also factors in determining the best color for a particular day or time of day.

Ensz has had best success during mornings and late afternoons. Some days, the bite may continue after dark. Those fishing from the bank or wading do better on cloudy, windy days or during evenings when the fish move in shallow. It's easy to

spook shallow fish from a boat.

Kanopolis water clarity is best right after ice is off, but after a few windy days, the lake can turn murky. Anglers like Ensz will always have a wide variety of swim bait colors. When he is fishing with a couple of buddies, they will usually start with everyone fishing a different color. Jig head colors can also make a difference, but the preference of most saugeye anglers is orange or chartreuse.

While Ensz has mainly pursued the early saugeye bite at Kanopolis, two other reservoirs may get his attention this year.

"I am definitely going to spend some time at Council Grove this year," he commented. "From everything I have seen, that lake has a good population of big fish and I've caught some big fish in the outlet when they have

released water in the early spring," he added.

I asked him what he would look for.

"Long flats or points near the river channel has been the pattern at Kanopolis, so that is where I would start looking. Water clarity will probably determine what depths I would fish."

Craig Johnson, the KDWP fisheries biologist for Council Grove, said he hears very little from anglers about the pre-spawn bite but is sure that those saugeyes would behave similar to those at Kanopolis.

"That's a very busy time for me since I am at other lakes helping with the gathering of walleye eggs," Johnson said. He intends to put a bug in the ear of some of the Council Grove anglers to see if they can come up with a pattern on the early saugeyes.

Since saugeyes have no natural reproduction, they must be stocked each year. In 2009, almost 88,000 saugeye fingerlings were stocked in Kanopolis along with 1,300,000 thousand fry. Council Grove Reservoir received 220,000 saugeye fingerlings and Sebelius received 121,000 fingerlings plus 600,000 fry. Tuttle Creek also gets saugeye stockings, but angler success in the reservoir has been limited. Downstream from Tuttle Creek at Rocky Ford, saugeyes are taken regularly.

Smaller impoundments like state lakes and community lakes are also stocked with saugeyes where they have been effective in controlling high densities of stunted crappies. Check out the saugeye column in the 2010 Fishing Forecast on Page 37 for lakes with good saugeye populations.

Ensz wishes he was closer to Sebelius, which is consistently rated as the top saugeye lake in the state and may put that on his list of lakes to visit this year.

Mark Shaw, the fisheries biologist for Sebelius, says that most of the anglers there concentrate their efforts for saugeyes during

the actual spawn in late March and early April.

Ensz rates saugeyes high on his list of fish he likes to catch because of their aggressiveness to hit a lure and their tendency to feed in shallow water. While walleyes may hide in deep waters during the summer, he

will find saugeyes in 10 feet deep or less.

The early pre-spawn bite at Kanopolis has attracted anglers from a wide area over the past five years. Last year, it wasn't uncommon to see 30 or more boats on the lake in late February and early March. At the same time, there might be 50 or more anglers wading or fishing from the bank.

I asked Ensz if there was a difference in the table qualities between saugeye and walleye fillets.

"I can't notice a taste difference, but the saugeyes are a fatter fish, which means I get more meat in a fillet compared to the same length walleye," Ensz says.

While saugeyes look like and even taste like walleyes, their habits vary. Those habits, which include a more aggressive behavior and shallow water feeding pattern, can make them an easier fish for anglers to catch.

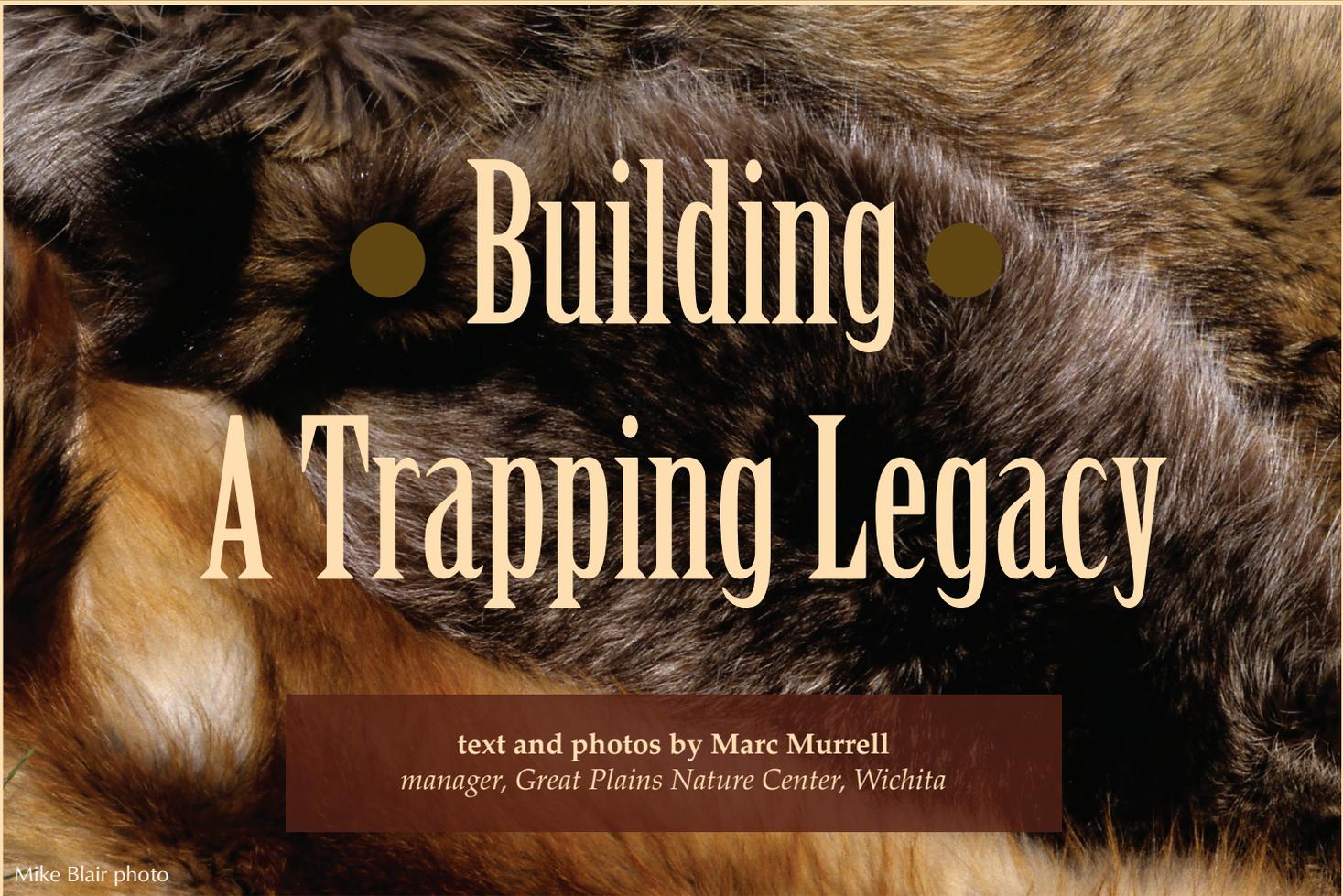
When late February and early March rolls around, those big female saugeyes will be putting on the feedbag. The weather may be on the cold and windy side, but if you want to catch a trophy size saugeye, it's prime time. 



If you're not sure if it's a walleye or saugeye by appearance, rub your fingers across the cheek. Walleyes' are smooth while saugeye and sauger have scaled, or rough, cheeks.



Although he's an avid hunter and angler, the author never had much interest in our country's history in the fur trade, Dad decided that the three



● Building ● A Trapping Legacy

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

Mike Blair photo

I've loved the outdoors since I was old enough to walk. I started fishing at age 4 and shot my first duck at age 9. Since that time I've logged thousands of miles hunting and fishing from northern Canada to South Texas and many points in between. While I consider myself well-versed with many aspects of most outdoor pursuits, I had never been exposed to trapping.

During the last decade, I dabbled in trapping a couple times after a friend offered to show me the ropes. On one trip, I was

amazed at the amount of skill and attention to detail required as my friend systematically set a few snares, foothold and body-gripping traps after locating a particular animal's travel route. Experienced trappers know their quarry's habits. I quickly learned that trapping on any large scale was hard work. I trapped for a few days and managed to catch a couple raccoons, possums and a skunk or two. I never sold my fur, opting to keep and tan the hides.

A couple years ago, when my twin boys, Brandon and Cody,

were 9, early explorers and the fur trade somehow became a topic of discussion. They were inquisitive and had many questions about trapping and the idea of swapping beaver skins and other fur for food, clothes, gunpowder and life necessities. Their curiosity about trapping piqued my interest once again. After a quick call to F&T Furharvester's Trading Post (the Cabela's or Bass Pro Shops for trappers) in late December, and I had some trapping supplies headed my way.

experience with trapping. When his young twin sons showed an of them could learn about trapping the best way he knew — by doing.

We decided we'd like to try various trapping methods and target raccoons. I got a half-dozen 220 body-gripping traps along with some size one-and-a-half foothold traps. I had a few snares still in the shed, so we were set.

The boys were excited as we scouted the perimeter of the marsh where we hunt ducks. For two nine-year-olds pretending to be trappers living off the land, the outdoors is the ultimate virtual video. They explored and wandered, got dirty like all little boys should, and we set a few traps.

The first trap check the next day revealed a possum the size of Texas. It was the largest I'd ever seen and the boys were pumped. Subsequent checks of the remaining traps found nothing. But over the next few days we did manage to catch a few raccoons, another possum and a skunk memorable for, well, you can imagine.

Another order in late January to expand my line, and I had more traps ready to set. To that point, our fur total stood at five raccoons, three possums and a

After hearing our

skunk. I explained to the boys we'd likely starve if we had to rely on furs to trade for essentials, but we were having a blast. The back of my truck was full of all the "treasures" little boys find in the woods ranging from dozens of chewed beaver sticks, skulls, bones and "really cool rocks."

After hearing our trapping



The beaver trapping season runs through the end of March, and gave the boys a real sense of what our ancestors were after more than 200 years ago. Trapping beaver required a whole new set of skills and a steeper learning curve.

trapping tales, a friend invited us to trap on his land for more adventures.



All trapping requires extensive knowledge, outdoor skills, and scouting. Balancing on beaver dams in hip waders requires superior coordination, or can provide comic relief as the author learned to the delight of his sons.

tales, a friend invited us to trap on his land for more adventures. It's beautiful country with a long, meandering creek running through it. An avid deer hunter, he didn't mind us removing "as many raccoons as we wanted" since he's got trail camera pictures of herds of them eating up his expensive deer corn. We set a dozen or so traps the afternoon of the Superbowl. Both boys would pick a spot based on the sign they observed and claim that trap. We spent most of the football game taking bets on which trap would have fur the following day.

The boys were like kids at Christmas waiting each day to

go check the traps after school or between basketball games on weekends. I wouldn't even have



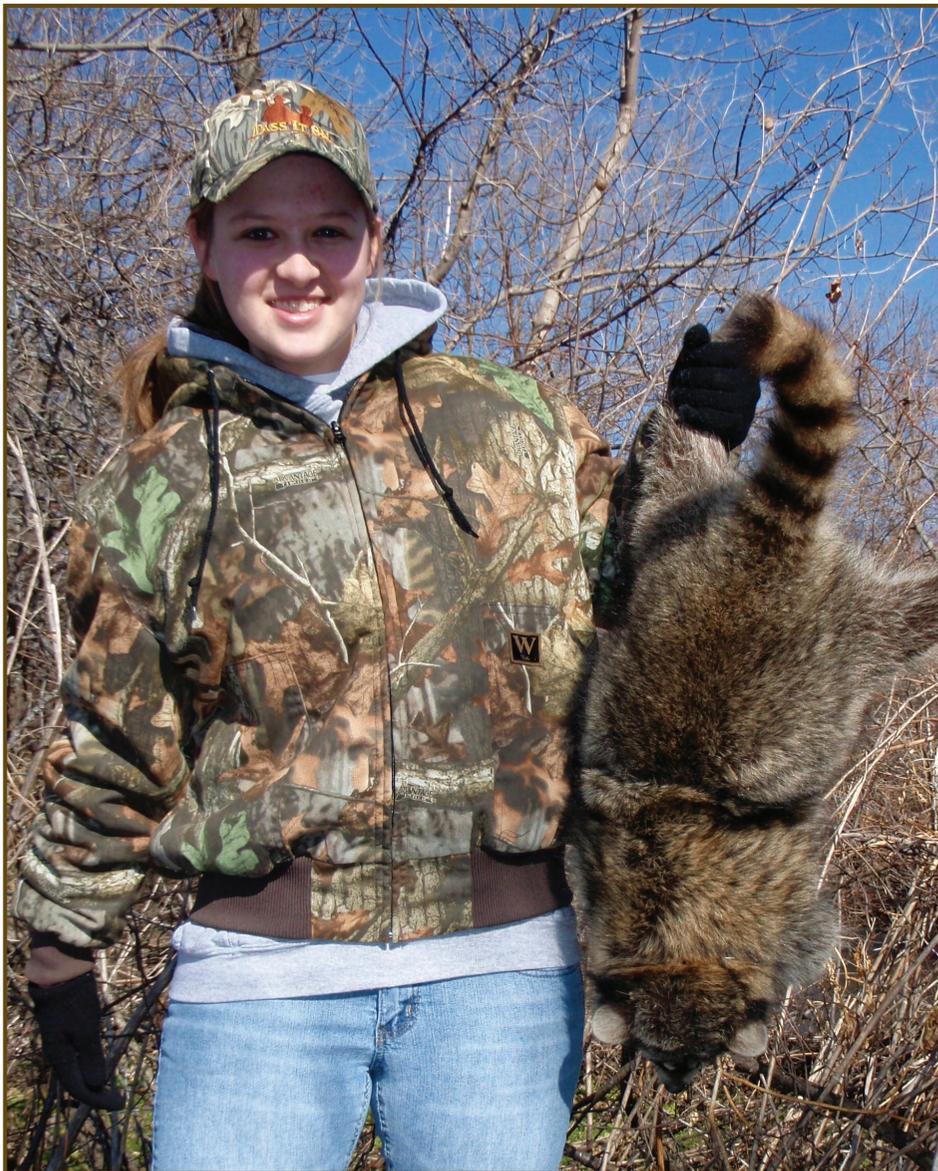
Furbearers such as skunks provide another variable in the equation, and catching one isn't for the weak at stomach.

my truck door shut when they were off running through the woods to see if we had any luck. My 16-year-old daughter, Ashley, even came along on a few checks.

As with any new outdoor venture, I learned by doing and improved my skills with experience. I also read for hours on the internet at places like Trapperman.com as there were literally hundreds of years of trapping experience condensed in their archives.

When the regular trapping season closed in February, our take totalled 24 raccoons, seven possums and three skunks. There were

I set a total of five traps in an area with bountiful beaver sign.



Raccoons are abundant to the point of being pests around farmsteads. Getting permission to trap isn't difficult and can be a family affair as the author's daughter shows.

many memorable moments such as the 22-pound boar 'coon we caught and a shifting wind that caused Cody to lose his lunch as we tried to take a few photos of a skunk.

Not really wanting to give up trapping just yet, we decided to try our hand at beaver trapping since that season runs through the

end of March. Another call and we had some 330 body-gripping traps and No. 4, 4-coiled footholds in route. The boxes arrived one day, and the traps were in the water the next day after school. More memories were made as ol' Dad provided comic relief by trying to cross a creek meant for chest waders wearing hip boots. It

was 30 degrees outside, and the water wasn't much warmer. When the boys quit laughing, I reminded them not to repeat any of the words they heard and told them what happens on the trap line, stays on the trap line.

Once again, I learned as I went and realized I was after a ghost in this particular location. It seems a lone beaver left most of the sign and it wasn't real fresh. He likely left the area looking for a mate, which explained our empty traps. Not discouraged, I tracked down another landowner with a few beaver dams on a creek. Many landowners don't care for beavers as they're destructive to trees and can also back water out into crop fields.

I set five traps in an area with bountiful beaver sign. The next day, the boys and I had our first beaver, a monstrous 58-pounder. Another fat, 46-pounder came two days later in the same trap, and we were ecstatic about our success after a slow start.

My boys and I will remember that season forever. Trapping will never be much of a money-making proposition. I'd spent \$320 on supplies and netted about \$175 from the sale of our fur, which more than paid for our gas and a few snacks and soft drinks. I might cover expenses in subsequent years, but that's not important to me. I can't put a price on the enjoyment I get from sharing the outdoors with my sons and watching them learn about predators, prey and where we as humans fit into that equation. Both boys got a detailed course in real world wildlife, and I'm proud they learned about nature actually being a part of it. ♡



2010 Kansas Fishing Forecast

Mike Blair photo

Use the following pages to find high-quality fishing for the sport fish you prefer. The forecast lists reservoirs (water bodies larger than 1,200 acres), lakes (waters from 10 to 1,200 acres), and ponds (waters less than 10 acres) for each species. Ratings include the **Density Rating**, which is the number of high-quality fish captured per unit of effort by fisheries biologists; **Preferred Rating**, which is the number of fish at a preferred length for that species; **Lunker Rating**, which is the number of fish sampled at a length most anglers consider a trophy, and **Biggest Fish**, which is simply the largest fish caught during sampling. The **Biologist's Rating** is a rating of E -excellent, G - good, F - fair or P - poor given by the biologist who considers other factors in addition to sampling. In theory, a lake with a **Density Rating** of 24 will have twice as many high-quality fish per acre as a lake with a **Density Rating** of 12.

The **3-Year Average** figure represents a three-year average in density ratings of a particular species. Not all lakes are sampled every year, so this column can help anglers evaluate a fishery that might not have been included in this forecast since current data was not available.

Lengths for high-quality, preferred- and lunker-sized fish are different for each species and are listed in parenthesis at the top of each column. This information will give you an idea not only of which lakes have high populations, but also those which have larger fish. You may view these tables on the department's web page www.kdwp.state.ks.us or a brochure can be mailed or picked up at a KDWP office.

BLUE CATFISH						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>20")	Preferred Rating (>30")	Lunker Rating (>35")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>20")
RESERVOIRS						
MILFORD	5.17	0.67	0.33	39.68	G	3.78
TUTTLE CREEK	1.00	0.63	0.00	15.87	F	1.25
EL DORADO	0.83	0.00	0.00	3.70	P	0.54
MELVERN	0.50	0.00	0.00	18.34	F	1.33
PERRY	0.25	0.00	0.00	3.20	F	0.13
LAKES						
YATES CENTER CITY LAKE-NEW	2.50	0.00	0.00	7.78	F	2.50
GRIDLEY CITY LAKE	2.00	0.00	0.00	3.64	P	1.33
MOUND CITY LAKE	1.00	1.00	0.00	18.22	F	1.00
YATES CENTER-SOUTH OWL LAKE	1.00	0.00	0.00	6.39	P	1.00

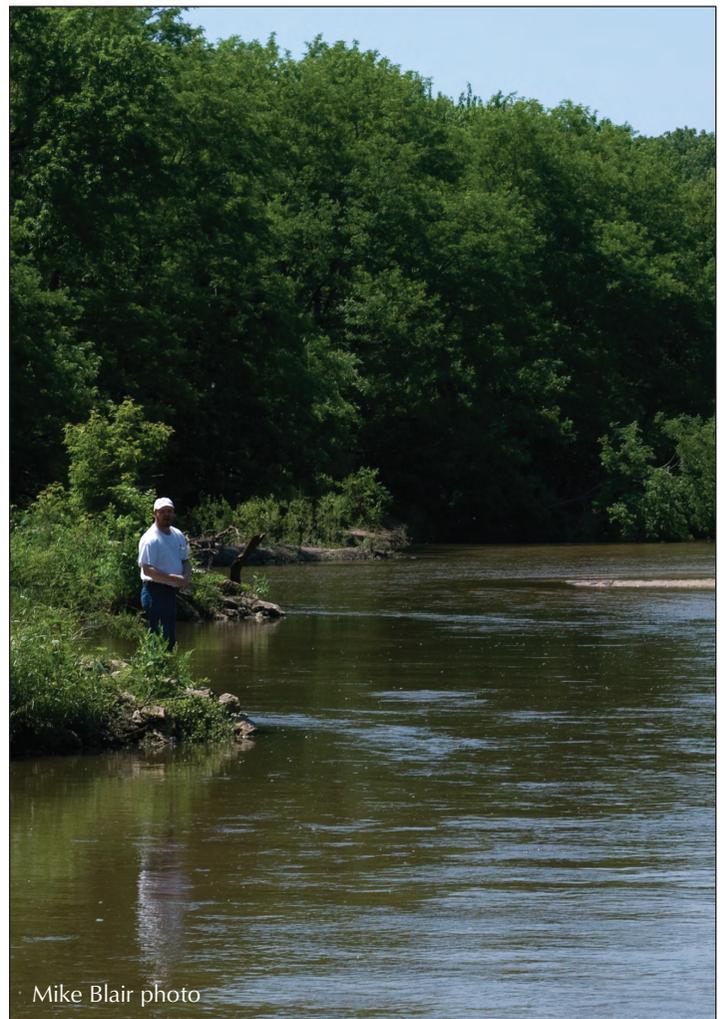
FLATHEAD CATFISH						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>20")	Preferred Rating (>28")	Lunker Rating (>34")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>20")
RESERVOIRS						
KIRWIN	11.00	9.00	3.00	28.22	G	7.67
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	2.00	2.00	0.00	12.99	F	2.67
CEDAR BLUFF	1.25	1.00	0.50	35.27	G	1.50
TUTTLE CREEK	1.00	0.75	0.25	22.49	F	0.97
WILSON	1.00	0.00	0.00	3.29	F	1.00
HILLSDALE	1.00	0.00	0.00	3.59	F	1.33
KANOPOLIS	1.00	0.00	0.00	4.36	G	1.00
WEBSTER	1.00	1.00	0.00	14.70	P	0.67
FALL RIVER	1.00	0.00	0.00	5.51	G	1.67
EL DORADO	0.83	0.50	0.00	13.34	G	0.61
POMONA	0.75	0.00	0.00	9.16	F	0.50
COUNCIL GROVE	0.50	0.00	0.00	6.25	G	0.83
MILFORD	0.50	0.00	0.00	4.37	F	1.72
LAKES						
HERINGTON CITY LAKE-NEW	2.00	0.00	0.00	10.58	G	2.00
JEFFREY EC - MAKE UP LAKE	1.00	1.00	0.00	15.87	F	2.00
RICHMOND CITY LAKE	1.00	1.00	0.00	13.13	F	1.67
GEARY SFL	1.00	0.00	0.00	3.83	F	1.33
HERINGTON CITY LAKE-OLD	1.00	0.00	0.00	7.94	F	1.00
YATES CENTER-SOUTH OWL LAKE	1.00	1.00	0.00	17.92	P	1.00
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	1.00	0.00	0.00	5.95	F	0.50
CARBONDALE CITY LAKE - EAST	1.00	0.00	0.00	7.05	F	1.00
BUTLER SFL	1.00	1.00	1.00	30.40	P	1.00
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #1	1.00	1.00	0.00	14.77	P	1.00



CHANNEL CATFISH						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>16")	Preferred Rating (>24")	Lunker Rating (>28")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>18")
RESERVOIRS						
CLINTON	13.50	0.25	0.00	4.24	G	13.58
HILLSDALE	10.75	1.75	0.00	9.79	G	5.83
POMONA	8.50	1.50	0.50	11.48	E	5.58
CHENEY	7.50	1.00	0.50	12.47	G	5.94
PERRY	5.25	0.75	0.25	11.68	G	7.03
LOVEWELL	4.50	2.00	1.00	14.39	G	4.33
BIG HILL	4.50	0.50	0.00	7.55	G	5.11
TUTTLE CREEK	4.13	0.88	0.13	7.75	G	1.99
LACYGNE	4.00	0.25	0.00	4.19	G	2.92
GLEN ELDER	3.40	0.70	0.20	13.67	G	4.37
MILFORD	3.33	0.50	0.00	7.13	G	2.66
COUNCIL GROVE	3.20	1.00	0.60	15.20	G	2.76
CEDAR BLUFF	3.00	1.25	0.75	14.88	G	2.42
LAKES						
CLARK SFL	35.50	3.00	0.50	12.14	E	28.83
FORT SCOTT CITY LAKE	33.00	9.00	1.50	12.55	E	20.33
BOURBON CO. LAKE	30.00	14.00	5.00	15.61	E	20.00
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	28.00	3.50	0.50	9.48	G	24.83
PLEASANTON - WEST LAKE	28.00	6.00	0.00	8.65	E	28.00
EUREKA CITY LAKE	24.00	6.00	3.00	14.33	E	15.33
MOUND CITY LAKE	21.00	5.00	4.00	14.71	E	14.67
GARNETT - SOUTH LAKE	21.00	1.00	1.00	12.50	G	11.67
SEDAN - OLD (NORTH) CITY LAKE	20.00	0.00	0.00	4.41	G	18.33
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LAKE	20.00	2.00	0.00	8.49	G	27.33
OLATHE-CEDAR LAKE	19.00	3.00	0.00	7.22	F	16.00
MELVERN RIVER POND	16.50	4.50	2.50	18.08	E	16.17
CARBONDALE CITY LAKE - EAST	15.00	2.00	1.00	9.92	G	12.33
OSAGE SFL	14.50	7.50	2.00	20.83	G	10.83
ESKRIDGE-LAKE WABAUNSEE	14.00	10.00	3.00	11.86	G	26.33
YATES CENTER-SOUTH OWL LAKE	14.00	4.00	0.00	9.22	G	17.00
MCPHERSON SFL	14.00	6.00	0.00	8.28	G	16.67
OTTAWA SFL	12.00	1.00	0.00	8.03	G	8.00
JAYHAWK BOY SCOUT LAKE	11.00	2.00	0.00	5.62	G	22.33
GRIDLEY CITY LAKE	11.00	4.00	1.00	12.83	G	12.67
LEAVENWORTH SFL	10.50	3.50	0.00	7.34	G	9.50
PLEASANTON - EAST LAKE	10.00	3.00	3.00	11.14	G	23.33
JO CO. SHAWNEE MISSION LAKE	10.00	2.00	0.00	6.02	F	9.50
BONE CREEK LAKE	9.50	2.50	1.00	12.85	G	13.17
CHASE SFL	9.00	1.50	0.50	12.84	G	6.33
ATCHISON SFL	9.00	0.00	0.00	4.26	F	10.33
SEDAN - NEW (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	9.00	2.00	1.00	11.46	G	6.00
NEOSHO SFL	8.50	3.00	0.00	10.03	G	7.67
CRAWFORD SFL	8.50	1.50	0.50	17.53	G	9.50
BROWN SFL	8.00	5.00	4.00	17.64	F	6.67
HERINGTON CITY LAKE-OLD	8.00	2.00	2.00	13.01	G	4.67
GRAHAM CO.-ANTELOPE LAKE	7.00	4.00	0.00	6.31	G	3.33
SHAWNEE CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	6.50	0.50	0.00	5.18	F	4.83
MONTGOMERY SFL	6.00	0.00	0.00	4.19	G	5.50
CHANUTE CITY LAKE	6.00	3.00	1.00	10.49	G	9.33
MIAMI SFL	6.00	2.00	1.00	8.97	F	5.00
MADISON CITY LAKE	6.00	1.00	0.00	5.84	G	14.67
LYON SFL	6.00	1.00	0.00	7.28	G	13.17
PRATT CO. LAKE	6.00	0.00	0.00	4.50	G	6.00
SHAWNEE SFL	6.00	0.00	0.00	4.23	G	5.67
HOWARD-POLK DANIELS LAKE	6.00	0.00	0.00	3.53	F	8.67
POTT. CO.-CROSS CREEK LAKE	6.00	1.00	0.00	5.76	F	7.00
WOODSON SFL	5.67	0.67	0.33	17.48	G	9.56
PARSONS CITY LAKE	5.00	0.50	0.00	4.68	G	4.67
BUTLER SFL	5.00	1.00	0.00	6.03	G	25.33
ATWOOD-LAKE ATWOOD-MAIN	5.00	0.00	0.00	3.51	F	4.00
MOLINE OLD (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	5.00	0.00	0.00	1.32	F	3.00
MOLINE NEW (NORTH) CITY LAKE	5.00	0.00	0.00	5.07	F	13.00
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	5.00	0.00	0.00	4.56	F	4.67
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LAKE	5.00	1.50	1.50	10.33	F	5.50
JEWELL SFL	5.00	0.00	0.00	3.43	G	5.50
JEFFREY EC- AUX. MAKEUP LAKE	5.00	1.50	0.00	6.32	F	2.33
COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE	5.00	2.00	0.00	5.87	G	7.00
YATES CENTER CITY LAKE-NEW	4.50	1.50	0.50	15.43	G	10.83
PAOLA CITY LAKE	4.00	0.50	0.00	2.83	F	3.17
PONDS						
PARKER CITY LAKE	14.00	8.00	0.00	7.13	F	7.00
HOLTON-ELKHORN LAKE	5.00	0.00	0.00	3.08	G	5.00
JEWELL CITY LAKE	3.00	0.00	0.00	4.50	F	3.00
GREENBUSH EDUCATION CENTER	2.00	0.00	0.00	2.56	G	5.33

BLUEGILL						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>6")	Preferred Rating (>8")	Lunker Rating (>10")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>6")
RESERVOIRS						
WEBSTER	25.13	0.19	0.00	0.48	G	10.54
GLEN ELDER	11.92	0.00	0.00	0.38	G	5.63
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	6.13	0.00	0.00	0.38	F	4.96
HILLSDALE	4.81	0.00	0.00	0.34	P	5.33
LOVEWELL	4.42	0.17	0.00	0.26	F	1.56
LACYGNE	4.19	0.00	0.00	0.32	F	2.69
BIG HILL	4.13	0.25	0.00	0.34	F	5.33
KANOPOLIS	3.31	0.00	0.00	0.35	F	2.77
CLINTON	2.08	0.00	0.00	0.30	P	3.24
PERRY	1.88	0.00	0.00	0.27	F	2.42
KIRWIN	1.75	0.00	0.00	0.37	F	0.58
LAKES						
ALTAMONT CITY LAKE-EAST	82.50	0.00	0.00	0.22	F	64.50
LOGAN CITY LAKE	48.50	0.00	0.00	0.36	G	44.94
POTT. CO.-CROSS CREEK LAKE	26.00	0.00	0.00	0.28	G	26.17
LENEXA-LAKE LENEXA	24.75	0.00	0.00	0.29	F	12.67
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LAKE	24.25	6.00	0.00	0.45	G	17.42
COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE	22.75	5.50	0.00	NA	E	15.92
CHERRYVALE CITY LAKE - TANKO	21.50	0.00	0.00	0.31	F	12.33
ESKRIDGE-LAKE WABAUNSEE	14.50	0.00	0.00	0.27	G	22.67
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #1	14.25	0.00	0.00	0.35	G	24.17
WILSON SFL	13.00	0.00	0.00	0.29	F	8.42
OTTAWA SFL	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.37	G	19.83
ROOKS STATE LAKE	11.25	0.00	0.00	0.53	G	8.25
LYON SFL	11.00	0.75	0.00	0.39	G	10.50
GARDNER CITY LAKE	10.80	0.00	0.00	0.34	F	24.07
SEDAN - OLD (NORTH) CITY LAKE	10.00	0.50	0.00	0.37	G	8.75
FORT SCOTT CITY LAKE	9.38	1.00	0.00	0.45	F	11.29
EUREKA CITY LAKE	9.25	0.00	0.00	0.34	G	11.25
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	9.00	0.50	0.00	0.49	G	7.92
GRAHAM CO.-ANTELOPE LAKE	9.00	3.50	0.00	0.61	G	14.92
BOURBON CO. LAKE	8.00	1.25	0.25	1.05	G	12.92
OLATHE-LAKE OLATHE	7.75	0.00	0.00	0.23	F	6.08
MOUND CITY LAKE	6.50	0.75	0.00	0.37	F	9.33
NEOSHO SFL	5.75	0.00	0.00	0.37	G	7.17
JO CO. SHAWNEE MISSION LAKE	5.75	0.00	0.00	0.31	F	11.05
PAOLA CITY LAKE	5.50	0.00	0.00	0.27	F	6.17
CHASE SFL	5.33	0.33	0.00	NA	G	3.49
RICHMOND CITY LAKE	5.25	0.00	0.00	0.25	F	2.42
ATCHISON SFL	4.75	0.00	0.00	0.29	F	14.75
PLEASANTON - WEST LAKE	4.75	0.00	0.00	0.32	F	8.00
OLATHE-CEDAR LAKE	4.25	0.00	0.00	0.28	F	9.58
MADISON CITY LAKE	4.25	0.00	0.00	0.22	G	8.08
DOUGLAS SFL	3.75	0.75	0.00	0.37	F	3.33
SCOTT STATE LAKE	3.75	0.00	0.00	0.32	F	7.42
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	3.50	0.00	0.00	0.24	P	3.61
PLAINVILLE LAKE	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.22	F	1.11
GREAT BEND-STONE PARK LAKE	3.25	0.00	0.00	0.23	F	12.42
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LAKE	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.33	F	4.67
HOWARD-POLK DANIELS LAKE	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.32	G	5.17
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	2.75	0.25	0.00	0.37	F	3.96
SHAWNEE CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	2.50	0.25	0.00	0.33	F	4.83
MONTGOMERY SFL	2.50	1.00	0.00	0.50	G	1.50
CENTRALIA CITY LAKE	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.40	F	2.29
BELLEVILLE-ROCKY POND	2.33	0.00	0.00	0.21	F	0.89
MOLINE OLD (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	2.25	0.00	0.00	0.28	F	6.08
WINFIELD CITY LAKE	2.00	0.00	0.00	NA	F	1.00
CHANUTE CITY LAKE	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.20	F	1.33
BOURBON SFL	1.75	0.00	0.00	0.25	F	5.85
JAYHAWK BOY SCOUT LAKE	1.75	0.00	0.00	0.34	F	1.08
BUTLER SFL	1.50	0.00	0.00	NA	F	7.81
BROWN SFL	1.50	0.75	0.00	0.49	F	9.17
MIAMI SFL	1.25	0.50	0.00	0.36	F	6.50
PONDS						
JEWELL CITY LAKE	168.50	0.00	0.00	0.29	G	59.83
ATCHISON CITY LAKE #3	24.00	0.00	0.00	0.35	F	21.83
ATCHISON CITY LAKE #1	18.00	0.00	0.00	0.39	F	25.67
LOUISBURG - LEWIS-YOUNG PARK LK	15.50	0.50	0.50	0.24	F	31.67
BROWNING OXBOW	8.00	1.75	0.00	0.86	G	4.00
ARMA CITY LAKE	4.00	0.50	0.00	0.37	F	4.39
BALDWIN - SPRING CREEK LAKE	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.22	P	6.61
HOLTON-ELKHORN LAKE	2.50	1.00	0.00	0.45	F	6.17
PARKER CITY LAKE	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.33	P	1.92
GREENBUSH EDUCATION CENTER	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.41	F	1.58

REDEAR						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>7")	Preferred Rating (>9")	Lunker Rating (>11")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>7")
LAKES						
LYON SFL	6.75	2.25	0.00	0.83	G	8.75
LEAVENWORTH SFL	6.75	1.25	0.00	0.55	F	8.25
CHERRYVALE CITY LAKE - TANKO	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.42	F	2.83
NEOSHO SFL	4.50	0.00	0.00	0.43	G	4.50
DOUGLAS SFL	4.50	0.00	0.00	0.42	F	6.08
THAYER CITY LAKE	3.50	0.00	0.00	0.46	G	3.58
JEWELL SFL	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.37	F	3.00
ATCHISON SFL	2.50	1.00	0.00	0.81	G	5.17
BUTLER SFL	1.75	0.50	0.00	0.56	F	3.81
BONE CREEK LAKE	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.37	G	3.33
MONTGOMERY SFL	1.50	0.75	0.00	0.64	F	4.08
MOUND CITY LAKE	1.25	0.00	0.00	0.32	G	2.17
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #2	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.36	P	0.42
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LAKE	0.75	0.75	0.00	0.69	F	5.33
WILSON SFL	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.35	F	4.03
LENEXA-LAKE LENEXA	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.79	P	0.33
HOWARD-POLK DANIELS LAKE	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.27	F	1.08
MIAMI SFL	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.80	P	0.83
BOURBON SFL	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.25	G	5.55
PLEASANTON - WEST LAKE	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.62	F	1.50
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.35	P	0.08
MOLINE OLD (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.42	F	1.92
CRAWFORD SFL	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.19	F	0.15
PONDS						
JEWELL CITY LAKE	6.00	1.00	0.00	0.67	G	4.00
LAWRENCE - P. DAWSON BILLINGS - S	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	P	0.00
ARMA CITY LAKE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.21	F	0.44
GREENBUSH EDUCATION CENTER	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.21	F	2.83



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BLACK CRAPPIE						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>8")	Preferred Rating (>10")	Lunker Rating (>12")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>8")
RESERVOIRS						
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	17.50	15.88	0.88	1.41	G	12.88
LOVEWELL	12.83	0.83	0.25	1.04	F	4.50
KIRWIN	5.00	0.25	0.06	1.05	G	2.13
WEBSTER	4.44	1.13	0.06	1.27	G	8.48
KANOPOLIS	2.25	0.38	0.00	0.91	F	1.00
BIG HILL	1.63	0.63	0.00	0.84	G	2.29
CLINTON	0.71	0.33	0.00	0.79	P	0.65
CEDAR BLUFF	0.60	0.45	0.20	1.13	P	1.05
HILLSDALE	0.56	0.19	0.00	0.58	P	1.19
WILSON	0.52	0.21	0.00	0.88	F	0.71
PERRY	0.42	0.08	0.04	0.99	P	0.26
GLEN ELDER	0.38	0.17	0.04	1.46	F	0.21
EL DORADO	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.40	P	0.52
MARION	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.59	G	0.86
FALL RIVER	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.49	P	0.06
LAKES						
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LAKE	49.75	19.50	0.50	1.45	G	31.33
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	42.50	38.50	1.25	2.02	G	18.96
HARVEY CO. LAKE - EAST	20.00	1.25	0.00	0.75	G	8.42
MIAMI SFL	16.50	6.00	0.00	0.85	G	13.67
BROWN SFL	12.75	3.25	0.00	0.91	G	13.42
NEOSHO SFL	11.50	0.00	0.00	0.40	G	15.08
PLASANTON - WEST LAKE	10.25	1.00	0.00	0.69	G	15.42
BUTLER SFL	9.00	0.25	0.00	0.68	P	6.50
GRAHAM CO.-ANTELOPE LAKE	8.00	7.00	2.50	1.38	G	23.75
BELLEVILLE-ROCKY POND	7.00	6.67	0.00	0.73	F	41.25
COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE	6.00	3.00	0.25	1.05	F	4.08
POTT, CO.-CROSS CREEK LAKE	5.25	1.00	0.00	0.57	F	11.00
ATCHISON SFL	4.75	1.00	0.00	0.59	F	5.83
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #1	4.50	0.75	0.25	0.99	F	4.50
PLAINVILLE LAKE	3.00	2.00	0.00	1.01	F	1.00
CHERRYVALE CITY LAKE - TANKO	3.00	1.50	0.00	0.66	P	6.00
RICHMOND CITY LAKE	2.75	2.25	0.25	0.94	G	2.67
MONTGOMERY SFL	2.75	2.00	0.00	0.60	F	1.58
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LAKE	2.50	0.25	0.00	0.81	F	5.92
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	2.50	1.00	0.25	0.54	G	3.54
PAOLA CITY LAKE	2.25	0.75	0.00	0.71	P	2.50
CENTRALIA CITY LAKE	2.13	0.63	0.13	1.12	F	4.13
PLEASANTON - EAST LAKE	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.39	F	1.17
JO CO. SHAWNEE MISSION LAKE	1.75	0.75	0.25	0.77	F	1.45
BOURBON CO. CEDAR CREEK LAKE	1.75	0.75	0.00	0.99	F	4.78
ESKRIDGE-LAKE WABAUNSEE	1.75	0.25	0.25	0.93	P	4.42
PRATT CO. LAKE	1.67	0.00	0.00	0.62	F	0.97
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	1.63	0.13	0.00	0.53	F	2.32
LYON SFL	1.50	1.25	0.75	1.01	P	1.17
SHAWNEE CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	1.50	0.25	0.25	0.75	F	2.92
JAYHAWK BOY SCOUT LAKE	1.50	0.25	0.25	0.88	F	0.81
CHANUTE CITY LAKE	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.48	F	0.83
JEWELL SFL	1.25	0.00	0.00	0.33	P	1.25
WILSON SFL	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.53	F	1.36
SEDAN - OLD (NORTH) CITY LAKE	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.29	P	0.58
BONE CREEK LAKE	0.83	0.50	0.17	1.99	G	0.44
LENEXA-LAKE LENEXA	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.35	P	0.50
SHAWNEE SFL	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.31	P	1.25
GARDNER CITY LAKE	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.44	F	2.47
SEDAN - NEW (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.80	P	0.50
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #2	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.28	P	3.33
OTTAWA SFL	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.48	P	0.42
BARBER SFL-LOWER	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.37	P	0.67
KIOWA SFL	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.29	P	0.33
THAYER CITY LAKE	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.52	F	1.42
HOWARD-POLK DANIELS LAKE	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.34	P	0.58
GREAT BEND-STONE PARK LAKE	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.32	P	0.47
NEBO SFL	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.22	P	0.50
MOLINE OLD (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.99	P	2.25
PONDS						
BROWNING OXBOW	29.75	8.25	1.50	1.62	G	11.17
BALDWIN - SPRING CREEK LAKE	7.33	1.00	0.00	0.60	F	12.56
GREENBUSH EDUCATION CENTER	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.28	P	9.08
LAWRENCE - P. DAWSON BILLINGS - SO	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.20	F	1.50
ATCHISON CITY LAKE #3	1.50	1.00	0.00	0.78	F	1.67
ARMA CITY LAKE	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.26	F	2.00
ATCHISON CITY LAKE #1	0.50	0.50	0.50	2.84	F	0.67
SALINA-LAKEWOOD LAKE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.16	P	0.11

WHITE CRAPPIE						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>8")	Preferred Rating (>10")	Lunker Rating (>12")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>8")
RESERVOIRS						
PERRY	43.38	12.75	1.13	1.83	G	29.29
KANOPOLIS	28.75	12.94	0.19	1.27	G	16.13
BIG HILL	25.00	16.25	2.88	1.32	E	18.25
LOVEWELL	23.92	10.50	0.33	1.37	F	9.06
HILLSDALE	23.88	9.69	0.63	1.11	G	29.96
FALL RIVER	15.00	3.13	2.19	2.70	G	17.69
LACYGNE	11.19	8.06	0.38	1.07	G	6.54
KIRWIN	7.88	6.81	0.88	1.55	G	7.83
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	7.50	2.75	0.00	0.90	F	6.21
MILFORD	5.13	0.88	0.08	1.28	F	3.52
MARION	4.80	1.40	0.20	1.36	E	8.68
POMONA	4.38	1.56	0.31	1.04	F	16.27
COUNCIL GROVE	4.27	3.07	0.33	1.13	G	6.73
CLINTON	4.08	1.63	0.33	1.07	F	9.13
GLEN ELDER	3.46	1.50	0.21	1.50	G	3.18
EL DORADO	3.19	0.69	0.13	1.13	G	2.06
TORONTO	2.83	1.50	0.83	2.76	G	25.11
ELK CITY	2.50	0.75	0.00	0.93	G	2.75
TUTTLE CREEK	2.38	0.63	0.13	1.03	F	1.92
LAKES						
EUREKA CITY LAKE	56.25	20.00	2.75	1.17	G	32.33
HARVEY CO. LAKE - EAST	44.75	19.50	1.25	1.25	G	20.58
OTTAWA SFL	42.25	9.50	1.25	1.36	E	31.00
HERINGTON CITY LAKE-OLD	41.33	14.33	2.00	1.24	G	22.69
SCOTT STATE LAKE	39.00	6.50	0.00	0.84	G	25.83
HOWARD-POLK DANIELS LAKE	37.75	6.00	2.25	2.65	G	19.42
OLATHE-CEDAR LAKE	32.25	11.25	0.25	0.95	F	31.83
SEDAN - NEW (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	32.00	22.25	5.50	1.21	G	26.92
CARBONDALE CITY LAKE - EAST	31.00	9.50	2.50	1.26	G	17.42
CHERRYVALE CITY LAKE - TANKO	28.00	12.50	0.50	0.82	E	17.17
ESKRIDGE-LAKE WABAUNSEE	27.25	5.00	1.00	0.88	G	41.92
MOLINE NEW (NORTH) CITY LAKE	21.25	8.25	1.25	1.34	G	31.00
PARSONS CITY LAKE	19.33	4.67	1.67	1.15	E	10.36
SEDAN - OLD (NORTH) CITY LAKE	18.25	7.00	2.50	1.16	G	38.08
NEOSHO SFL	17.50	3.25	0.00	0.56	G	14.25
COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE	15.75	9.75	0.00	0.79	G	15.42
MARION CO. LAKE	12.00	6.25	3.00	1.34	G	16.75
ALTAMONT CITY LAKE-EAST	10.50	2.00	0.50	1.37	G	5.33
FORT SCOTT CITY LAKE	8.00	5.38	0.75	1.40	G	6.13
MADISON CITY LAKE	8.00	1.25	0.75	1.17	F	10.67
PLAINVILLE LAKE	8.00	6.33	0.00	0.83	F	2.94
CLARK SFL	7.63	1.38	0.00	0.77	F	3.15
WELLINGTON CITY LAKE	7.50	4.00	0.00	0.79	P	2.72
BOURBON CO. LAKE	7.50	0.25	0.00	0.62	G	3.28
CHANUTE CITY LAKE	6.50	0.00	0.00	0.34	F	3.50
OLATHE-LAKE OLATHE	6.50	1.75	0.00	0.61	F	14.67
CHASE SFL	6.00	0.50	0.00	0.49	G	5.00
GEARY SFL	5.75	1.50	0.50	1.61	G	3.67
MEADE STATE LAKE	5.00	2.25	1.50	1.46	F	6.83
OLPE CITY LAKE	4.75	1.00	0.25	0.92	F	2.50
SHERIDAN SFL	4.75	2.00	0.00	0.69	P	14.25
JEFFREY EC - MAKE UP LAKE	4.50	4.25	0.25	0.86	F	2.00
NEBO SFL	4.25	0.25	0.00	0.52	F	5.92
KIOWA SFL	4.00	1.50	0.75	1.15	P	2.10
MOUND CITY LAKE	3.50	2.00	1.00	1.25	G	13.67
ELLIS CITY LAKE	3.50	1.25	0.50	1.16	P	7.94
WINFIELD CITY LAKE	3.33	1.83	0.17	0.88	G	6.61
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	3.25	0.50	0.00	0.62	F	1.25
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	3.00	2.13	0.38	1.27	F	3.28
BOURBON SFL	2.75	1.25	0.50	1.24	G	5.25
MIAMI SFL	2.75	1.00	0.00	0.66	F	4.67
JO CO. SHAWNEE MISSION LAKE	2.75	1.50	0.25	1.01	F	2.78
HERINGTON CITY LAKE-NEW	2.67	1.00	0.67	1.23	F	4.56
OSAGE CITY LAKE	2.50	1.00	0.00	0.57	F	5.67
GARDNER CITY LAKE	2.40	0.40	0.00	0.64	F	4.00
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	2.38	0.63	0.38	1.01	P	1.46
SHAWNEE SFL	2.25	0.50	0.25	0.80	F	5.92
PONDS						
BROWNING OXBOW	164.00	58.50	8.00	1.96	G	66.69
NEOSHO WMA - KDOT POND	11.25	5.50	2.00	1.60	G	14.33
ATCHISON CITY LAKE #1	9.00	6.50	1.00	1.12	F	8.00
SALINA-LAKEWOOD LAKE	5.50	0.50	0.25	0.94	F	3.47
LAWRENCE - P. DAWSON BILLINGS - N	3.50	3.00	0.50	0.77	F	2.67
PARKER CITY LAKE	2.50	2.00	1.75	1.43	F	2.25

NORTHERN PIKE						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>21")	Preferred Rating (>28")	Lunker Rating (>34")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>21")
LAKES						
KINGMAN SFL	14.00	3.00	1.00	10.50	E	8.00

SPOTTED BASS						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>11")	Preferred Rating (>14")	Lunker Rating (>17")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>11")
RESERVOIRS						
CEDAR BLUFF	23.91	6.52	0.00	1.60	G	24.95
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	7.82	4.12	0.00	2.18	G	12.63
MILFORD	3.02	2.26	0.00	2.16	F	1.63
LAKES						
BOURBON SFL	64.71	8.82	0.00	1.87	E	39.97
HOWARD-POLK DANIELS LAKE	22.35	10.59	0.00	2.65	F	18.07
WINFIELD CITY LAKE	18.84	7.25	0.00	2.08	G	8.69
FORT SCOTT CITY LAKE	13.41	1.22	0.00	1.49	F	10.43
WILSON SFL	12.62	4.85	0.00	2.43	E	23.43
CHASE SFL	10.57	0.81	0.00	1.25	G	25.33
MARION CO. LAKE	10.10	3.03	0.00	1.81	G	7.37
COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE	9.25	0.58	0.00	1.37	G	8.10
EUREKA CITY LAKE	6.86	0.00	0.00	1.07	F	5.88
GARNETT-CEDAR CREEK LAKE	5.68	0.00	0.00	0.99	P	3.82
CRAWFORD SFL	3.60	0.00	0.00	1.48	F	3.22
CHANUTE CITY LAKE	0.53	0.53	0.00	1.45	P	1.55

SMALLMOUTH BASS						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>11")	Preferred Rating (>14")	Lunker Rating (>17")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>11")
RESERVOIRS						
COFFEY CO. LAKE	19.25	8.56	2.14	2.71	E	31.47
WILSON	18.91	5.88	0.00	2.54	G	19.63
GLEN ELDER	13.73	8.12	0.84	4.21	G	15.11
MILFORD	5.51	2.31	0.18	2.92	G	4.37
MELVERN	4.50	3.50	0.25	2.38	F	6.87
BIG HILL	2.91	1.82	0.73	4.08	E	12.56
EL DORADO	2.75	0.69	0.23	3.65	F	8.54
PERRY	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.28	P	0.00
CLINTON	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.30	P	0.00
LAKES						
BOURBON CO. LAKE	8.39	5.81	0.00	2.02	G	6.81
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #2	6.85	5.48	2.05	3.10	G	4.22
JEFFREY EC- AUX. MAKEUP LAKE	4.35	0.72	0.00	1.17	G	1.45
ESKRIDGE-LAKE WABAUNSEE	4.13	0.00	0.00	1.02	G	5.33
JEFFREY EC - MAKE UP LAKE	3.70	2.47	0.00	1.25	G	6.94
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	2.06	0.00	0.00	1.05	F	1.21
GEARY SFL	1.40	0.47	0.00	1.36	F	0.80
ATCHISON SFL	0.98	0.00	0.00	0.88	F	0.33
JEWELL SFL	0.98	0.98	0.00	2.44	P	0.98
LEBO CITY LAKE	0.67	0.67	0.00	1.46	P	1.23
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LAKE	0.65	0.65	0.65	3.73	P	0.50
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	0.53	0.00	0.00	0.91	F	0.34
SHAWNEE CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	0.53	0.53	0.00	1.71	F	1.41
GARNETT CITY LAKE-NORTH	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.57	P	0.00





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LARGEMOUTH BASS						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>12")	Preferred Rating (>15")	Lunker Rating (>20")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>12")
RESERVOIRS						
LACYGNE	84.35	39.13	5.22	8.38	E	74.18
PERRY	37.80	25.26	2.61	6.55	G	23.70
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	27.57	4.94	0.00	3.67	G	19.34
WILSON	24.37	8.40	0.00	3.71	F	14.22
BIG HILL	18.91	5.09	1.82	6.72	E	15.24
CEDAR BLUFF	9.70	6.53	0.40	4.70	F	13.43
HILLSDALE	8.30	2.83	0.00	4.09	F	16.75
TUTTLE CREEK	6.15	3.07	0.00	4.05	F	11.08
CLINTON	5.10	2.28	0.00	3.66	P	6.23
LAKES						
GARNETT-CRYSTAL LAKE	163.16	63.16	0.00	4.56	E	111.86
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #1	152.44	20.73	1.22	5.17	E	139.26
PLEASANTON - WEST LAKE	150.00	74.00	4.00	4.92	E	114.42
LYON SFL	141.18	26.47	0.98	5.73	G	123.10
LENEXA-LAKE LENEXA	130.00	51.67	0.00	4.48	G	95.92
BUTLER SFL	122.00	58.00	5.00	6.00	E	94.21
MOLINE NEW (NORTH) CITY LAKE	108.82	36.27	0.00	3.53	G	102.29
BROWN SFL	102.94	29.41	0.00	3.24	G	82.56
COWLEY SFL	99.21	24.60	1.59	4.66	G	60.49
GARNETT CITY LAKE-NORTH	96.51	32.56	0.00	3.24	E	100.57
BELLEVILLE-ROCKY POND	96.08	41.18	0.98	5.45	E	47.90
JO CO. SHAWNEE MISSION LAKE	88.28	24.22	2.34	5.35	G	75.90
SHERIDAN SFL	86.09	31.30	0.00	4.90	G	95.70
PRATT CO. LAKE	85.07	37.31	0.00	3.69	G	105.29
PAOLA CITY LAKE	84.55	8.94	0.00	4.78	G	48.38
LEAVENWORTH SFL	81.94	12.26	0.00	3.02	G	51.51
MCPHERSON SFL	80.39	44.44	0.65	4.85	G	64.81
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LAKE	79.74	30.72	1.31	4.80	G	75.02
JOHNSON CO.-HERITAGE PARK LAKE	78.33	51.67	0.00	4.61	G	74.81
OLATHE-LAKE OLATHE	78.13	20.00	1.88	5.84	G	51.99
POTT. CO.-CROSS CREEK LAKE	76.54	7.41	0.00	3.07	G	55.43
GARDNER CITY LAKE	75.12	14.35	0.00	3.85	F	57.85
MIAMI SFL	73.08	32.69	0.00	4.21	G	79.48
SEDAN - OLD (NORTH) CITY LAKE	70.59	17.65	3.53	5.84	E	89.31
JAYHAWK BOY SCOUT LAKE	70.59	41.18	1.47	3.64	G	100.70
PRESCOTT CITY LAKE	67.14	11.43	2.86	7.05	G	34.25
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	66.81	42.02	0.84	4.53	G	60.74
MELVERN RIVER POND	66.67	27.27	0.00	3.95	G	102.10
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	63.40	5.67	0.52	4.62	F	49.80
NEBO SFL	60.78	34.31	8.82	8.65	G	50.11
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LAKE	59.80	24.51	0.00	4.25	G	39.10
PLEASANTON - EAST LAKE	58.10	12.38	0.95	5.79	G	40.67
GOODMAN SFL	57.69	46.15	3.85	6.99	G	43.17
FORT SCOTT CITY LAKE	57.32	19.51	2.44	5.66	G	49.06
OTTAWA SFL	56.67	15.33	6.00	8.78	G	45.49
BOURBON SFL	55.88	13.24	2.94	6.83	G	44.47
OLATHE-CEDAR LAKE	55.77	26.92	0.96	6.61	G	60.71
EUREKA CITY LAKE	54.90	9.80	0.00	4.41	G	84.97
SHAWNEE CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	54.26	14.89	2.13	7.63	G	48.20
MOLINE OLD (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	52.94	0.00	0.00	1.22	F	62.09

LARGEMOUTH BASS						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>12")	Preferred Rating (>15")	Lunker Rating (>20")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>12")
LAKES (continued)						
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #2	52.74	22.60	0.00	2.60	G	42.40
MEADE STATE LAKE	52.31	41.54	0.00	3.78	G	61.79
TOPEKA - LK. HAMMOND (YMCA)	50.00	0.00	0.00	1.49	F	50.32
NEOSHO SFL	49.29	15.71	0.71	5.41	F	44.48
LOGAN CITY LAKE	49.02	5.88	0.00	2.91	G	30.71
BONE CREEK LAKE	48.26	22.61	0.87	4.52	G	45.48
MADISON CITY LAKE	48.04	25.49	5.88	6.17	E	67.32
BOURBON CO. LAKE	47.74	23.87	0.00	4.38	G	38.37
HOWARD-POLK DANIELS LAKE	47.06	32.94	2.35	6.61	E	54.08
GRIDLEY CITY LAKE	47.06	1.18	0.00	1.87	F	93.95
KIOWA SFL	46.81	19.15	2.13	4.84	F	48.77
ATCHISON SFL	46.08	19.61	0.98	3.75	F	59.25
SEDAN - NEW (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	45.38	22.69	0.00	2.54	G	66.11
YATES CENTER-SOUTH OWL LAKE	41.89	24.32	0.00	3.51	F	36.37
MARION CO. LAKE	41.41	15.15	0.00	3.62	G	20.90
SCOTT STATE LAKE	39.74	20.51	0.00	5.56	F	66.64
GRAHAM CO.-ANTELOPE LAKE	36.13	20.17	0.00	4.98	F	56.71
GREAT BEND-VETS PARK LAKE	34.88	13.95	0.00	4.79	P	36.59
THAYER CITY LAKE	34.00	11.50	1.00	5.86	F	59.63
ALTAMONT CITY LAKE-EAST	33.33	18.33	0.00	5.73	E	48.64
MONTGOMERY SFL	33.03	4.59	0.00	4.30	G	24.36
OSAGE SFL	32.58	3.37	0.00	4.06	F	34.46
CLARK SFL	31.83	19.52	1.20	6.03	G	54.41
GARNETT-CEDAR CREEK LAKE	29.55	13.64	2.27	5.03	P	21.00
CHASE SFL	28.46	8.13	0.00	2.59	G	25.43
KINGMAN SFL	28.36	16.42	2.24	5.24	F	22.12
OSAWATOMIE CITY LAKE	27.54	2.90	1.45	5.25	F	32.10
YATES CENTER CITY LAKE-NEW	25.66	7.96	0.00	2.38	G	41.15
WILSON SFL	24.27	12.62	1.94	5.51	G	24.87
ESKRIDGE-LAKE WABAUNSEE	23.14	7.44	2.48	5.76	G	31.61
BLUE MOUND - CITY LAKE	22.67	6.67	1.33	5.08	F	20.52
COLDWATER LAKE	20.37	7.41	0.00	2.80	P	41.48
WICHITA-SOUTH LAKE	19.35	6.45	0.00	3.51	G	10.46
DOUGLAS SFL	18.49	5.88	0.00	3.45	F	16.73
BOURBON CO. CEDAR CREEK LAKE	17.50	7.50	0.00	2.94	F	16.79
CHANUTE CITY LAKE	17.37	5.79	0.00	5.08	F	21.01
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	16.92	4.98	0.00	3.15	P	17.49
COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE	16.18	5.78	0.58	4.45	G	18.64
CARBONDALE CITY LAKE - EAST	15.69	6.86	0.98	6.17	F	16.34
JETMORE CITY LAKE	15.25	6.78	0.00	3.24	G	37.03
WINFIELD CITY LAKE	15.22	11.59	0.00	3.78	F	12.40
OSAGE CITY LAKE	15.18	8.93	0.89	5.31	P	38.96
WICHITA - KDOT - WEST BORROW PIT	15.09	4.72	0.00	3.73	G	17.62
LEBO CITY LAKE	14.67	8.00	0.67	5.29	F	47.74
GEARY SFL	14.49	2.80	0.00	2.84	G	21.21
HARVEY CO. LAKE - EAST	14.00	6.67	0.00	4.31	G	16.95
ANTHONY CITY LAKE	13.72	8.58	0.00	5.02	F	12.68
CHERRYVALE CITY LAKE - TANKO	13.04	8.70	0.00	2.65	G	33.13
CRAWFORD SFL	12.40	10.00	1.20	5.85	P	10.82
CENTRALIA CITY LAKE	12.17	12.17	0.00	3.69	P	8.84
WICHITA-WATSON PARK LAKE	12.15	1.87	0.00	2.74	F	7.03
PLAINVILLE LAKE	9.80	8.82	0.00	3.10	F	18.29
ELLIS CITY LAKE	9.09	5.45	0.00	4.37	P	19.13
WOODSON SFL	7.75	5.43	0.00	2.58	P	11.43
OGDEN CITY LAKE	7.29	1.04	0.00	3.88	F	9.10
PONDS						
SEVERY CITY LAKE	129.41	23.53	0.00	3.31	G	144.05
NEW STRAWN CITY LAKE	88.33	30.00	5.00	7.47	G	89.56
YATES CENTER KIDS PONDS	65.22	60.87	0.00	2.47	F	52.93
EMPORIA-PETER PAN PARK	64.71	41.18	0.00	3.31	G	101.96
HOLTON-ELKHORN LAKE	62.75	0.00	0.00	1.44	F	28.42
EMPORIA-JONES PARK - N POND	60.00	0.00	0.00	1.32	G	106.67
LAWRENCE - P. DAWSON BILLINGS - N	59.26	22.22	0.00	4.11	F	70.29
BALDWIN - SPRING CREEK LAKE	51.11	15.56	4.44	5.78	F	39.47
EMPORIA-JONES PARK - W POND	50.00	10.00	0.00	2.20	G	51.67
OVERBROOK LAKE	42.86	9.52	0.00	3.04	G	64.50
BLACK KETTLE SFL	36.04	15.02	0.00	3.83	F	22.68
ATCHISON CITY LAKE #1	33.33	1.96	0.00	3.53	F	16.56
NEMAHA WILDLIFE AREA POND	28.81	6.78	0.00	3.42	G	28.81
OSAWATOMIE-BEAVER LAKE	26.92	7.69	0.00	4.14	F	15.64
JEWELL CITY LAKE	26.47	11.76	0.00	2.30	G	28.62
LAWRENCE - P. DAWSON BILLINGS - S	15.15	3.03	0.00	2.70	P	17.11
WICHITA - KDOT - EAST BORROW PIT	13.54	8.33	1.04	5.15	F	7.79
LEBO KIDS POND	10.00	10.00	0.00	4.65	P	24.44

WALLEYE						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>15")	Preferred Rating (>20")	Lunker Rating (>25")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>15")
RESERVOIRS						
CHENEY	20.00	4.50	0.50	7.57	G	14.06
LOVEWELL	19.83	1.17	0.17	7.03	G	12.44
KIRWIN	19.50	3.00	0.00	5.10	G	11.33
WILSON	17.00	0.88	0.13	6.16	G	14.20
WEBSTER	16.50	1.00	1.00	6.36	G	19.67
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	12.00	0.00	0.00	1.73	G	4.67
MILFORD	10.67	0.67	0.00	4.74	G	7.72
CLINTON	8.00	1.00	0.75	6.47	G	3.58
CEDAR BLUFF	7.50	2.25	0.50	8.86	G	8.25
MARION	7.00	1.50	0.50	6.28	E	5.17
GLEN ELDER	6.80	1.40	0.00	6.28	G	7.28
HILLSDALE	5.00	2.25	1.50	10.30	G	5.83
EL DORADO	4.00	1.33	0.00	4.05	F	7.40
MELVERN	2.75	0.25	0.25	6.31	G	2.67
KANOPOLIS	0.25	0.00	0.00	3.36	F	0.31
LAKES						
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	55.00	13.50	2.00	9.26	G	30.17
COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE	13.00	0.00	0.00	1.93	G	11.67
LEAVENWORTH SFL	10.00	2.00	0.00	5.29	G	8.00
WINFIELD CITY LAKE	9.50	5.00	2.00	7.76	G	6.94
JEFFREY EC-AUX. MAKEUP LAKE	8.50	0.00	0.00	1.64	G	3.33
JEWELL SFL	7.00	0.00	0.00	1.31	F	6.17
PLEASANTON - EAST LAKE	3.00	0.00	0.00	1.64	F	3.00
SCOTT STATE LAKE	3.00	2.00	1.00	7.25	G	19.67
JEFFREY EC - MAKE UP LAKE	2.00	0.00	0.00	1.27	F	3.00
BROWN SFL	2.00	1.00	1.00	6.39	F	2.00
BOURBON CO. LAKE	2.00	1.00	0.00	4.26	F	2.67
SHAWNEE CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	2.00	0.50	0.00	5.08	F	3.17
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LAKE	2.00	0.00	0.00	2.90	F	3.33
YATES CENTER-SOUTH OWL LAKE	2.00	0.50	0.00	4.56	P	1.67
BOURBON SFL	2.00	2.00	0.00	4.20	F	1.67
BARBER SFL - LOWER	2.00	1.00	0.00	5.75	F	1.30
FORT SCOTT CITY LAKE	1.50	0.50	0.50	8.20	F	2.17
BUTLER SFL	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.47	P	1.83
PRATT CO. LAKE	1.00	1.00	0.00	4.56	F	7.00
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.84	F	1.67
ATCHISON SFL	1.00	1.00	0.00	5.40	F	2.67
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #2	1.00	0.00	0.00	2.40	P	1.67
MEADE STATE LAKE	1.00	1.00	0.00	3.92	P	1.00
BONE CREEK LAKE	0.50	0.50	0.00	3.80	P	1.50

SAUGER						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>11")	Preferred Rating (>14")	Lunker Rating (>17")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>11")
RESERVOIRS						
PERRY	7.50	2.75	0.25	2.67	G	3.78
CLINTON	3.00	3.00	2.25	2.58	F	5.69
MELVERN	1.25	1.25	0.50	2.03	G	5.92
LAKES						
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LAKE	12.50	12.50	9.50	3.54	G	20.00

SAUGEYE						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>14")	Preferred Rating (>18")	Lunker Rating (>22")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>14")
RESERVOIRS						
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	9.00	5.50	0.50	6.42	G	20.83
COUNCIL GROVE	4.80	3.60	1.40	6.19	G	13.18
KANOPOLIS	4.25	2.50	0.75	5.45	G	6.08
LAKES						
WELLINGTON CITY LAKE	22.00	6.00	1.00	5.49	F	10.00
PARSONS CITY LAKE	16.50	16.50	9.00	5.29	E	9.83
GEARY SFL	13.00	3.00	0.00	3.40	G	7.67
ESKRIDGE-LAKE WABAUNSEE	10.00	4.00	2.00	6.87	G	8.67
OTTAWA SFL	9.00	7.00	0.50	4.25	G	12.00
CHASE SFL	8.50	6.50	3.50	6.12	G	10.67
OLATHE-LAKE OLATHE	8.50	4.00	0.00	2.55	G	12.00
SHERIDAN SFL	7.00	4.00	1.00	4.68	G	11.67
CHANUTE CITY LAKE	6.00	4.00	0.00	4.23	P	5.00
PAOLA CITY LAKE	5.00	1.00	0.00	2.04	F	5.50
CRAWFORD SFL	4.50	1.00	0.00	2.42	P	2.17
LYON SFL	4.00	3.00	0.00	2.65	F	5.50
OLPE CITY LAKE	4.00	4.00	1.00	4.41	F	2.67
OLATHE-CEDAR LAKE	4.00	4.00	1.00	4.40	F	4.33
EUREKA CITY LAKE	4.00	3.00	1.00	4.63	F	6.33
CENTRALIA CITY LAKE	3.50	3.00	2.00	5.07	F	7.33
MADISON CITY LAKE	3.00	2.00	0.00	3.53	F	3.17
GARDNER CITY LAKE	3.00	1.00	0.00	2.08	F	6.08
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	3.00	0.00	0.00	2.06	F	3.00
CARBONDALE CITY LAKE - EAST	2.00	2.00	2.00	4.41	F	2.00
SEDAN - OLD (NORTH) CITY LAKE	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.50	F	1.33
GRAHAM CO.-ANTELOPE LAKE	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.21	F	11.00



Mike Miller photo

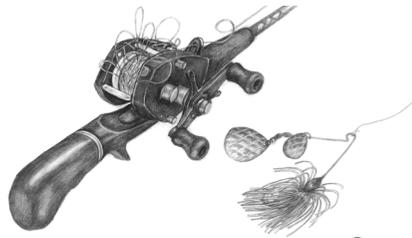
WHITE BASS						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>9")	Preferred Rating (>12")	Lunker Rating (>15")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>9")
RESERVOIRS						
GLEN ELDER	100.10	4.30	0.70	2.94	G	48.41
KANOPOLIS	92.25	48.75	3.50	2.22	E	52.83
KIRWIN	78.50	9.00	5.00	2.95	E	28.17
CLINTON	65.00	12.75	0.25	1.68	G	27.33
HILLSDALE	46.75	27.25	0.25	1.54	G	33.67
LACYGNE	42.75	28.75	0.75	2.18	G	27.83
CEDAR BLUFF	40.25	29.00	7.75	1.71	E	44.67
BIG HILL	30.00	11.00	1.00	1.71	G	33.89
PERRY	29.25	3.00	0.00	1.48	F	33.08
COUNCIL GROVE	25.20	6.40	0.20	2.20	G	17.89
MILFORD	24.67	17.67	3.50	2.43	G	12.83
MARION	21.50	10.50	2.50	2.21	E	34.67
FALL RIVER	18.75	11.50	4.00	3.31	G	26.50
WEBSTER	18.00	0.00	0.00	0.67	G	8.33
POMONA	15.50	5.25	0.00	1.33	F	7.08
LOVEWELL	11.17	2.50	0.50	1.82	F	21.33
MELVERN	6.75	3.00	0.00	1.30	F	14.83
TORONTO	6.33	5.67	3.00	2.87	G	32.86
TUTTLE CREEK	5.63	3.38	2.38	3.01	F	11.14
WILSON	4.13	2.63	0.25	1.94	F	5.51
EL DORADO	3.17	0.83	0.00	0.91	G	4.69
LAKES						
JEFFREY EC- AUX. MAKEUP LAKE	56.00	37.50	3.00	1.79	E	36.67
COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE	41.00	37.00	5.00	1.90	G	19.33
SHAWNEE CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	34.50	9.00	0.00	1.09	G	25.06
PAOLA CITY LAKE	29.50	1.50	0.00	1.14	F	16.83
HERINGTON CITY LAKE-NEW	28.00	14.00	0.00	1.37	G	31.33
WINFIELD CITY LAKE	28.00	25.50	1.50	2.17	G	13.56
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	19.00	3.00	0.00	1.01	F	8.00
MARION CO. LAKE	16.00	8.00	1.00	1.91	G	6.67
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LAKE	14.00	14.00	5.00	2.31	F	7.50
FORT SCOTT CITY LAKE	12.00	9.00	0.50	3.11	G	9.17
YATES CENTER CITY LAKE-NEW	8.00	7.00	0.00	1.39	P	5.00
CARBONDALE CITY LAKE - EAST	8.00	1.00	0.00	0.64	F	3.33
MELVERN RIVER POND	8.00	7.00	0.50	1.72	P	8.33
JEFFREY EC - MAKE UP LAKE	7.00	4.00	0.00	1.29	F	5.33
GEARY SFL	7.00	2.00	0.00	1.12	F	8.67
CENTRALIA CITY LAKE	6.00	0.50	0.00	0.78	F	9.83
HARVEY CO. LAKE - EAST	6.00	3.00	0.00	0.88	F	3.33
CHASE SFL	5.00	1.50	0.00	1.35	F	22.33
HERINGTON CITY LAKE-OLD	5.00	3.00	0.00	1.39	F	12.33
CLARK SFL	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.68	G	11.50
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	3.00	2.00	1.00	1.70	F	3.50
WILSON SFL	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.68	P	5.17
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LAKE	1.50	1.50	1.50	2.26	P	1.17
DOUGLAS SFL	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.43	P	0.67
SEDAN - NEW (SOUTH) CITY LAKE	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.93	P	1.00
GARDNER CITY LAKE	1.00	1.00	0.50	1.77	F	18.33

WIPER						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>12")	Preferred Rating (>15")	Lunker Rating (>20")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>12")
RESERVOIRS						
MARION	68.50	43.00	6.00	5.05	E	39.94
SEBELIUS (NORTON)	36.50	31.00	15.00	5.30	E	34.83
CLINTON	24.50	24.50	1.00	4.49	G	25.50
KIRWIN	23.50	18.50	14.50	8.05	G	15.00
GLEN ELDER	23.13	21.38	7.88	6.01	G	12.86
WEBSTER	19.00	11.00	8.50	14.38	G	9.17
MILFORD	18.00	14.67	3.33	11.90	G	16.94
CEDAR BLUFF	15.00	15.00	11.75	11.65	G	14.25
CHENEY	10.50	7.50	4.00	9.92	G	13.22
LACYGNE	10.00	8.75	3.25	7.28	G	11.92
POMONA	9.00	8.75	5.25	8.52	G	8.50
LOVEWELL	6.17	2.67	1.33	9.59	F	8.39
COUNCIL GROVE	6.00	0.00	0.00	1.29	F	2.33
EL DORADO	4.00	4.00	0.00	2.73	G	9.51
KANOPOLIS	3.50	1.50	1.00	9.70	F	5.50
LAKES						
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LAKE	34.00	29.00	9.00	9.53	G	38.33
PLEASANTON - EAST LAKE	32.00	15.00	2.00	5.42	E	12.67
JEFFREY EC - MAKE UP LAKE	31.00	30.00	1.00	3.95	G	28.00
SHAWNEE CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	29.50	9.00	5.00	5.64	G	12.33
MELVERN RIVER POND	23.00	4.50	2.50	4.17	G	13.33
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LAKE	22.50	1.50	1.50	5.90	G	10.17
SHERIDAN SFL	21.00	6.00	5.00	4.87	G	14.33
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	19.00	19.00	13.00	5.72	E	13.67
OLATHE-LAKE OLATHE	17.00	1.00	0.00	1.81	G	14.50
HERINGTON CITY LAKE-NEW	16.00	7.00	2.00	7.94	G	25.67
PRATT CO. LAKE	15.00	12.00	8.00	4.25	G	17.00
JO CO. SHAWNEE MISSION LAKE	13.00	13.00	10.00	6.28	G	7.83
COLDWATER LAKE	13.00	13.00	0.00	3.23	F	44.00
LEAVENWORTH SFL	8.00	6.50	0.00	3.40	F	10.33
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	7.00	1.00	0.00	3.58	G	7.17
MARION CO. LAKE	6.00	6.00	1.00	4.31	G	10.00
JEFFREY EC- AUX. MAKEUP LAKE	6.00	5.50	0.50	4.25	F	4.00
GRIDLEY CITY LAKE	5.00	4.00	0.00	3.15	F	7.33
YATES CENTER-SOUTH OWL LAKE	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.37	F	3.67
WINFIELD CITY LAKE	4.00	4.00	2.50	6.18	G	6.22

STRIPER						
IMPOUNDMENT	Density Rating (>20")	Preferred Rating (>30")	Lunker Rating (>35")	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Bio Rating	3-Year Average (>20")
RESERVOIRS						
WILSON	9.00	0.13	0.00	15.32	E	10.82
GLEN ELDER	0.50	0.25	0.00	11.93	P	1.24
LAKES						
PLEASANTON - EAST LAKE	1.00	0.00	0.00	9.35	P	0.33



Mike Miller photo



Backlash

by Mike Miller

A Perfect Turkey Hunt

Last spring, I declared that I was a Fairweather Johnson turkey hunter, preferring to hunt turkeys only when the weather was calm and warm. My justification was that I enjoyed those days more than the cold, windy ones. Last spring was windy, even by Kansas standards, so my focus was on the weather. However, I've decided there are other factors that influence my turkey hunt frequency.

One key is that I don't have to kill a turkey anymore. I don't. I will, but I've discovered that killing a bird is not my primary motivation. It used to be. Killing is an integral part of any hunt. However, when I was younger, I had my reputation to consider. As a young man starting work in the wildlife field, it was important that my colleagues saw me as a skilled hunter. Killing a bird seemed necessary for that. It was also the adrenalin-surging culmination of the hunt, and I got as excited as anyone. But with years of turkey hunting experience, my motivations have changed.

So what drives me to hunt turkeys? I know this sounds cliché, but it's just being there. It's watching and hearing the spring woods wake up on a fine spring morning. Twenty-five years ago, a perfect turkey hunt ended with me carrying a big tom to the truck. Today, a perfect turkey hunt goes something like this:

The "hunt" actually starts the night before. Roosting a gobbler is essential for morale, and it makes getting up at 4:30 a.m. seem almost reasonable.

I must be in the woods at dark-thirty. It's part of the experience, and the chilled pre-dawn air makes sunrise a much-anticipated event.

I'll find a tree wider than my shoulders with a strutting zone in front. A proud gobbler wants to be seen but not exposed. A green carpet of fresh cheatgrass and a few evenly spaced honey locust trees make a perfect foreground.

Now, I move rocks, twigs and dry leaves, so comfort and quiet are at least semi-approachable. I carefully take calls out of my hunting vest's oversized pockets – a peg-and-slate, a freshly-chalked box, and my favorite diaphragm. Calls are positioned precisely. I practice reaching for each to ensure movement is efficient. Then I plop the diaphragm in my mouth to prime the reeds. Quietly, I load my shotgun and lay it across my lap.

I pull my facemask down, put on gloves, take a deep breath and relax. I slow my breathing so I can hear everything. Yep, that was a gobble! That could be a good sign – the bird gobbling early on the roost. But I

know the bird could go silent as soon as its feet hit the dirt. Or the tom could have four or five hens roosted nearby, and I won't be able to call it away from them. There are no guarantees, and if there were I wouldn't be here. It's time to watch the woods wake up.

Movement! Ghostly dark shapes moving over the green carpet, mingling with the black shafts of locust trunks. Blink hard, squint and focus – a family of raccoons is hurrying home after a night on the prowl. They move with the urgency of being late, racing the impending sunrise. They don't have time to look, or maybe they never knew I was there. It's going to be a good morning. Each experience counts.

A chickadee is awake. Bobwhites call, "keyuck," from their grassy roost. Quail calls always make me smile. Maybe it's the optimism I take from the fact that they survived the winter.

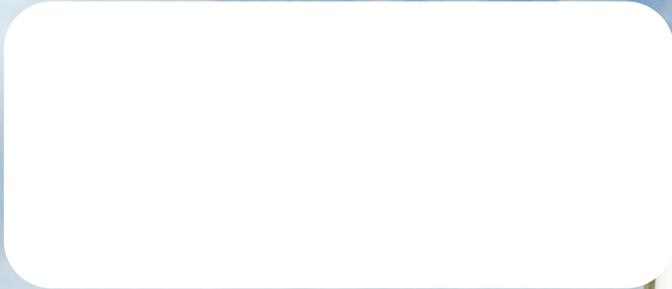
Footfalls — delicate and careful. My eyes bounce around trying to locate the source in the dim light. Larger shadows. Three deer, more wary than the 'coons, now stand statue still, looking toward me. Probably smelled where I walked in. Turkeys can't smell me, so I didn't worry about scent. A doe and last year's fawns silently slip around my position; not really alarmed, but not relaxed, either. They count.

The woods glow dimly with an eerie aura. Not really sunrise, yet. The eastern sky glows yellow. I scrunch back against the tree and fold my arms to ward off the chill. Sun is taking his time. Another gobble, and I forget about the cold.

Finally, there is orange and yellow fire flooding over the horizon. Warmth. The gobbler chortles and sings to welcome the sun. Time to let him know I'm here and convince him I'm a hen. A few soft yelps on the slate call should do it.

Out of the corner of my eye, I catch movement; a gray flicker among the tangle of locust branches. It's fast and silent, and my eyes have trouble catching up. A sharpshin glides through the trees, looking for breakfast. Glad I'm not that chickadee.

More gobbles resonate from the trees to the east. Then the sound of big wings cutting damp air, and cackling yelps bounce off the hills. The bird's on the ground! My heart rate bounces. Some soft clucks on the slate, followed by my sweetest-sounding yelps on the diaphragm. Another gobble, and it's closer! Yep, already a perfect turkey hunt. I could go home happy right now, but I think I'll stay and see how this turns out. ♡



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