

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

MAY/JUNE 2012

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Farm Pond Treasures

Usually, we are just talking about early summer fishing patterns and how the tomatoes are faring in the garden in late April and May. This year has been odd, to say the least. Spring actually sprung in February, and some great fishing happened in late March. The white bass started their spawning run the last week of March, and farm ponds heated up early.

While fishing is often exceptional on our Kansas reservoirs, state and community lakes, and streams and rivers, some of our best and most accessible fishing is found in Kansas farm ponds.

I love farm ponds. The ecosystem created is vibrant. Wood ducks make nests in the trees around a wooded farm pond, and Canada geese make it their home. Big bull frogs croon their song, and white-tailed deer come in to drink after a long warm day. The plethora of wildlife that find farm ponds useful is enough to make anybody a farm pond fan – but that isn't the reason I love farm ponds.

I love farm ponds because of the fishing. The landscape of Kansas is speckled with hundreds of thousands of farm ponds that hold healthy fisheries. Largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, bullheads and crappie are just some of the species that a person can look forward to catching in the private impoundments that help make Kansas one of the hottest fisheries in the Midwest.

Some of the current state records were caught in Kansas farm ponds. All of the biggest largemouth bass I have landed came from farm ponds. I know guys who have caught thousands of crappie, but the biggest ones they have landed came out of a farm pond.

Accessibility is another big plus for farm pond fishing. A fisherman doesn't need a big fancy boat with state-of-the-art electronics to fish a large part of the structure in most farm ponds; just walk the banks and cast to structure. You never know what is lurking under that submerged log.

KDWPT is always looking for ways to increase opportunities for our license holders. Just as the Walk-In Hunting Area Program has been a huge success for our hunters, the F.I.S.H. program provides anglers the opportunity to access private ponds and streams. It is important to note that most of these impoundments are only open from March 1-October 31. Check the signage to be sure when a particular pond or stretch of stream is open. Also note that the length and creel limits on F.I.S.H. waters may be different than the statewide limits.

The daily creel limits for channel catfish and largemouth bass are two each on F.I.S.H. properties. There is also an 18-inch minimum length limit on largemouth bass. Always remember to respect the landowner and his property by closing gates, not damaging fences and cleaning up any trash you find.

A farm pond is a great place to introduce kids to the thrill of fishing. They can catch a fish or just search the shoreline for frogs, turtles or interesting animal tracks in the mud. There are plenty of activities to keep the youngsters interested. I hope to see you and your family at a F.I.S.H. pond this summer. 🍷

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Wildlife & Parks

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Front Cover: Bob Gress photographed this great horned owl to illustrate the eye shine. It's sometimes possible to identify species by the color their eyes reflect at night. **Back Cover:** Marc Murrell snapped this photo of Kendall Strutt holding a nice walleye during an early-May fishing trip on Lovewell Reservoir.



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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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FISH VISION

Editor:

I'm just writing to let Jonathan Manteuffel know how informative, as well as entertaining, I found his article "How Does a Bass See?" in my recent *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* issue. It's always good to learn (or relearn in my case) the fundamentals of light and color as it relates to one of the best pastimes on earth – fishing!

Thank you very much.

*Bryan Glaser
Manhattan*

Dear Mr. Glasser,

Thanks for the input. Jonathan knows his stuff and is an accomplished angler in his own right.

Shoup

GOBBLER OR JAKE?

Editor:

The cover of the March/April 2012 issue was a great picture of a strutting wild turkey. The caption on the inside cover read, "A magnificent Rio Grande gobbler struts to attract hens during the spring breeding season." Based on the bird's short stubby beard and lack of a full tail fan, I think it could more accurately be described as a Rio Grand jake. Regardless of age, it is a magnificent bird.

Keep up the good work.

*Brenden Mannell
(email)*

Mr. Mannell:

I stand corrected. I use the word "gobbler" too loosely to describe a male turkey, when it should describe an adult male turkey. That bird looks like a jake to me, too.

Mike Miller

CONCERNS OVER BAITING

Editor:

As a Kansas landowner and an avid hunter and outdoorsman, I have come to a quandary in my deer and turkey hunting. A method that is

HUNTING *with Kent Barrett* HERITAGE

The North American Wildlife Conservation Model

Spring is now past, turkey season is almost a memory, and the Kansas summer is gaining momentum. It is easy to think that hunting, like the snow of winter, is far in the distant future. But it won't be long before the doves are headed south and the siren call of the hunt will be heard again. Now would be a good time to reflect on how our hunting heritage came to be, how those echoes of the past came to allow us to enjoy this activity that is so important to us.

As the 1800s came to a close, it became obvious that wildlife in North America was in trouble. All large game animals: bison, elk, pronghorn antelope, deer, turkeys, as well as grizzly bears were reduced to the point that these species were struggling for their very survival. Small game animals and many species of birds such as egrets, the heath hen, the passenger pigeon, the Labrador duck and the Carolina parakeet were also pressured tremendously during this time. Unfortunately, some of these species succumbed to these pressures and faded into history, becoming extinct. It was a dark hour for American wildlife.

A conservation movement was fueled with ideas from individuals such as journalist George Bird Grinnell, naturalist John Muir, future U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, forester Gifford Pinchot and later land manager Aldo Leopold. Eventually a standard of scientific principles were established to protect and conserve wildlife for the benefit of those who would come afterward. This began the history of cooperation that we continue to enjoy today with organizations like the Boone and Crockett Club, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and many, many others that work together for the sake of wildlife. Wildlife was issued a reprieve and the

recovery began.

Hunters also joined in this effort as the most dedicated of conservationists. Hunters and sportsmen strongly supported paying for this idea themselves by taxing sporting arms and ammunition for the benefit of wildlife. Hunters were willing to pay with their own money to preserve this rich heritage of hunting and to preserve the natural environment. A highlight of this movement came with the passage of the 1937 Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. Other legislative acts have followed as other groups of sportsmen have chosen to assist in funding the conservation and wise use of our wildlife resource. This effort culminated in a new system of wildlife conservation known to the world as the North American Model. This model has become the shining example to the world of wildlife conservation and management. We would do well to understand this model better.

In the North American Model, wildlife are not owned by individuals but are managed as a public trust so that every citizen has an opportunity to hunt and fish. Hunters and anglers pay for scientific wildlife management through the purchase of licenses and permits, as well as excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment.

As a hunter, you are an integral part of this model. You inherit the successes of the past along with all of the proud traditions of the hunt. Hunters have earned a place in the American outdoors, and you should rightfully feel pride for the accomplishments of the hunting community. The responsibility to continue the proud heritage of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation now rests on your capable shoulders. Let's continue to work together so that this model remains the envy of the world.

We will be well into spring according to the calendar by the time many of you are reading this, but as I write my column in the last week of March, it seems like spring has been here for several weeks already! Many plants are far ahead of where they should be this year, bursting into spring splendor. I don't think I can ever remember seeing the lilacs bloom in March. There has been an abundance of insect life already, as my windshield shows, and many friends have had mosquito bites and lots of ticks, as well. Many species of birds took advantage of the mild weather we had this winter, with thousands of waterfowl staying farther north than usual and four whooping cranes over-wintering in the state for the first time.

The phenology (defined as the branch of science dealing with the relations between climate and periodic biological phenomena) of many species is changing, with local butterflies seen out and flying in January, plants flowering weeks sooner than what is considered normal, birds arriving and nesting earlier than normal and many other examples. A friend of mine in south-east Kansas, Larry Herbert, reported checking bluebird boxes on one of his trails this week and finding one with baby birds in it already – earlier than he had ever seen them in 40-plus years of record keeping. Other species such as eastern and Say's phoebes were found in greater numbers in Kansas this past winter and early spring, no doubt because they could find flying insects to feed on when there shouldn't have been any. Other bird species have been slowly expanding their range northward, including the greater roadrunner and the white-winged dove – species that used to be fairly rare.

The extended periods of mild temperatures throughout the late winter and early spring have made for some confusion in the world of birds and humans alike. I have slept with the windows open for a couple of weeks – not a typical March for sure. It has let me enjoy one of my favorite bird songs without



Spring in Kansas

panes of glass hindering the sound – the American robin. The shelterbelt behind where I live in Pratt has hosted dozens of them for several weeks, and they usually start the morning serenade about a half-hour before sunrise, making it almost unnecessary for me to set an alarm clock. Most all of the thrushes have complex songs that are very interesting to hear, and the robin is no exception. Spring is the season to work on your birding-by-ear skills, with most species practicing their songs, even if they are only migrating through our state.

There are plenty of really good resources for bird songs on-line or available through companies that handle nature publications.

There are other opportunities to get outside and practice all your birding skills in the spring and early summer. The annual Spring Meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society will be held in Garnett on May 6-8. It will offer the chance to see lots of migrants and spend time with other like-minded outdoor enthusiasts. The first two weeks of May are probably the most anticipated by Kansas birders, with the peak of neotropical

migrants passing through at this time. Shorebird migration is on the downswing, but many are still around, making for days when more than 150 species can be seen. Later, our resident birds will be done courting and will concentrate on raising young.

This time of year really makes me glad that I live in Kansas. We seem to get some of the best of spring migration, even though we are in the middle of the continent. Get out and enjoy what the out-of-doors has to offer.

Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine Editor Recognized

Mike Miller, chief of KDWPT's Information Production Section, is the recipient of the 2011 Conservation Communicator of the Year award from the Kansas Wildlife Federation. Miller received his award at the Federation's 48th Conservation Achievement Program Awards Banquet in Salina on Feb. 25. He joined the agency in 1983 as an illustrator for the magazine and other publications. Three years later, he was named associate editor and, in 1989, became the editor.

Miller also coordinates the Pass It On program and is passionate about communicating the importance of hunter recruitment and mentoring youth. He especially enjoys teaching wingshooting to young shooters. Miller's wife, Lisa, also attended the banquet.

—Ron Kaufman, director of Information Services, Topeka



Letters . . .

legal and rapidly increasing in popularity in Kansas is to hunt turkey and deer over bait and/or game feeders. Most states allow feeders, but they can't be used several weeks prior to and during turkey and deer seasons. I could base my argument on hunter ethics and fair chase, but that is and always will be a personal choice.

So to address this in a way all sportsmen can individually understand, I think one of the issues regarding baiting and the use of feeders is that it has created conflicts between landowners. Those that have feeders and those that hunt roosting or strut areas for turkeys and scrape lines, bedding areas, rubs, wind direction, etc. for deer don't see eye to eye. I know I don't. The attitude that "My neighbor baits so if I don't they will kill all of the deer or turkey" will eventually create hunter-landowner conflicts if it hasn't already. I personally have harvested deer with corn in their digestive system. However, the only grown corn is several miles away. Since I know the adjacent landowner uses feeders and the harvested deer came from that ownership, it wasn't too hard to conclude where that deer got its corn. I have also heard the same landowner shoot minutes after turkey fly down and always in the area where he has a game feeder. This particular landowner couldn't call his dog much less a turkey, so it's quite obvious he kills his turkeys at the feeder.

The second and the most pressing issue regarding use of game feeders is the increased risk of disease. Concentrating deer nose to nose facilitates the spread of disease. Chronic wasting disease and bovine tuberculosis both are spread by close contact, so minimizing this risk by prohibiting baiting or game feeders is important where these diseases are found.

I propose that the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism look at this issue and place

IT'S THE LAW

with Kevin Jones

HANDGUNS WHILE HUNTING



Recent changes in both state statutes and KDWP Commission regulations will affect when a person is allowed to carry a handgun and the type of equipment that may be used for archery hunting. You may recall that during the 2011 legislative session, an amendment passed that allows individuals with concealed carry permits to carry their permitted handguns during a weapon restrictive hunting season. That allowance has now been expanded to allow anyone who can lawfully possess a firearm to carry a handgun during seasons established for specific types of equipment. Additionally, the KDWT Commission added a provision to the regulations that allows certain people to use crossbows during archery seasons for big game and wild turkey.

During the legislative session, House Bill 2491 was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. This bill amended KSA 32-1002 by adding the provision that nothing shall prevent, "any person who lawfully possesses a handgun from carrying such handgun while lawfully hunting, fishing or furharvesting." It is important to note, however, that this amendment applies to only handguns, and, while a person in lawful possession of a handgun may carry it while hunting, it does not necessarily allow the person to use it for hunting.

As an example, during the archery deer season a hunter may only use archery equipment to take a deer. While the hunter may possess a handgun while hunting during the archery season, the handgun may not be used as part of taking, or killing, the deer. This means that the handgun could not be legally used to put down or "finish off" a wounded deer during the archery season. The same rule applies during the early muzzleloader-only season for deer or during wild turkey season where only certain types of equipment are legal to be used for hunting and taking the game.

The regulations controlling the equipment that may be legally used for taking big game and wild turkey were also amended by Commission action. These changes in the regulations expands the ability for certain people to use crossbows while hunting deer and turkey. These new provisions allow any person lawfully possessing a youth permit or any person 55 years of age or older to use a crossbow during the archery season for either deer or wild turkey. These individuals are also allowed to use crossbows during the muzzleloader-only season for deer. The use of crossbows was formerly allowed only during an archery season by someone who possessed a crossbow disability permit. This permit is restricted to people who have a medical disability that prevents them from using a bow or required them to use a draw locking device on a bow. The new provisions do not replace the crossbow disability permit but simply allow a new group of hunters to use crossbows.

It is important for the hunter to know the type of permit they possess and the season dates and equipment limitations for that permit and particular season. As always, consult the regulation summary or contact department staff if you have questions. It is always better to ask first instead of being sorry later.

The Way I See It

Todd Workman

The Last Laugh; ME!

An old Tarzan movie depicts a large, deep pit covered with palm fronds. The man-eating tiger falls into the pit. Later on, Tarzan falls into the pit, and there is a fight to the death. Tarzan lives on, and he has a nice tiger skin rug for his tree house.

I was 12 years old, and this was my earliest exposure to primitive weaponry. There is nothing more primitive than using a pit to catch a wild animal and then using one's hand-to-hand fighting skills to dispatch the beast. Inspired, I dug a hole similar to a shallow grave in the vacant lot directly south of our house that we used for a baseball field. I then covered it with my race car bed spread, using tent stakes to nail it down tight to the ground. I cunningly covered it with dirt and grass until it was virtually invisible. Thus, my first primitive trap was set.

Later that day, according to my mother, I did catch a beast – a 40-year-old beast. The baseball field needed cutting, and my mother used the old guilt ploy to get Dad to “do something nice” for the kids. Dad's pride and joy was his Commander 700 lawnmower. According to Mom's eye witness report, she was watching dad as he deftly maneuvered his lawnmower through the field. He had a smoke in one hand and a glass of ice tea in the other as the Commander 700 thundered through the field, cutting down everything in its path. She observed him suddenly spot something peculiar in his path, craning his neck to identify the anomaly. There was a whoosh and a long wail that sounded like TOOOO! That was enveloped in a mushroom cloud of dust and cigarette smoke. The mower motor abruptly stopped with my bed spread wedged firmly in the blades. My dad was still perched in the captain's seat, a look of astonishment on his face, four feet below the surface of the Earth. I had captured my first animal!

It was weeks before my thoughts returned to trapping wild game. A moratorium had been put on any unsupervised activities, thus curtailing my creative juices, and my summer days were filled with mowing our lawn with a push lawn mower. When Dad got home from work, my job was to hand him tools as he tried to resurrect the Commander 700. It never rose above the pit.

My last attempt at primitive pit traps involved a large old two-story barn with a hay loft full of raccoons. I set a box trap in the loft, and on the way down the ladder of the 45-foot tall barn, I observed a small opening in the second story floor. Trapping instincts took control. Soon the hole was covered with a thin layer of hay. You would think that my Uncle Phil would have remembered that he had a hole in the floor, but he didn't. It was really luck that a 4-by-6 brace 3 feet below that hole kept him from falling all the way to the floor.

Luckily, I stopped in town before I went out to Uncle Phil's. The poker game was going full blast when I went in to say hello to my Uncle Jerry. When they saw me come in, the room went silent and then erupted with laughter. Evidently I was famous

for trapping Uncle Phil. They were murmuring something about how he rode a truss and now he is wearing one. At any rate, I wasn't allowed south of Topeka until everything was healed up.

Coincidentally, my Uncle Jerry was involved in one of my last observations of using truly primitive means to harvest game. He and I were standing along a fencerow, waiting for a long line of pheasant hunters. It was a sunny early afternoon in late November, and our job was to pick up the hunters who were stretched out in a lazy skirmish line three-quarters of a mile away. We were loitering next to the fence having a cow chip throwing contest when I came upon a hole in the ground. Uncle Jerry, a sergeant in WWII, came up and barked out that this was a badger den.

“I'll show you how to get this badger out of that hole. Get me some barbed wire out of my truck, soldier!”

“Yes sir,” I saluted smartly and quickly ran to the truck and came back with a 20-foot-long piece of old coiled up wire.

“Watch close now. I will spread these strands into a fork and snake this down into the hole. When I hit him, I will start twisting it to get it caught in his hair, and then I will yank him out.”

“Then what?”

“We will take him prisoner and make him talk.” He shouted in true drill sergeant demeanor.

His excitement was catching, and I watched the barbed wire disappear in the hole. Presently Uncle Jerry grunted in surprise.

“I think I hooked into something,” he said incredulously. We heard a low growl coming from underground.

“I did hook something!” he shouted and the barb wire pulled tight and then started to uncoil rapidly out of the hole. “Look out,” he yelled as the coils wrapped around his legs and he went down like a roped calf. “Help me!”

“Every man for himself,” I yelled and headed for the truck. I heard something about a cowardly, mutinous act as I slammed the pickup door shut. I watched as Uncle Jerry army-crawled his way towards the truck.

I honked the truck horn as cover fire. Uncle Jerry interpreted that as a warning that the badger was still charging him and he crawled right into the truckbed like a greased eel. At the same time, a huge flock of prairie chickens that had witnessed the episode exploded into the air. Most were chuckling and some were downright laughing.

“I am going to teach you some basic self-defense moves when I get untangled,” growled my uncle as he struggled to cut himself loose from the tight wire coils. I exited the truck as the line of hunters swept up to the end of the field. Dad headed for me as Uncle Jerry opened the truck door. Caught between the Commander and the Sergeant in an effective pincer movement, I ran up the white flag and accepted terms.

Letters . . .

it high on your list of important topics, just as important as changing deer and turkey seasons, hunting methods, limits, permits, etc. In order to protect our precious deer and turkey populations from disease, to encourage good landowner relationships and to promote high-quality hunter ethics, I recommend changing the regulation to prohibit the method of hunting deer and turkeys over feeders and all other feed unless grown as a crop or food plot.

*Lew Ruona
Baldwin City, Kansas*

Mr. Ruona,

Thanks for a thoughtful and well-written letter. Department staff are in the process recommending a regulation prohibiting use of bait on department-managed lands to our Commission. However, this would not impact use of bait or feeders on private land. I will pass your suggestion on to our big game biologist and Wildlife Section chief.

Mike Miller



GALS HUNT TURKEYS, TOO

Editor:

There's always lots of pictures of guys turkey hunting. Just thought I'd send a picture to show "Gals do it, too!"

Pictured is Deana Griffin and her daughter Autumn (9 yrs old). Taken 4/16/2011 in the Melvern Lake area

*Maxine Griffin
(email)*

Boat SAFE

with Erika Brooks

Paddle Sports



Interest in kayaking and canoeing has increased rapidly across Kansas recently, and it's easy to understand why. Not only can paddlesports be a great way to get outside and enjoy nature, they're also a great way to exercise. Persons of any age can participate, and even if you are unable to paddle, you can ride in a tandem kayak or a canoe. Whole families, including the family dog, can join in for a relaxing day on the water.

A main attraction of paddlesports is the quiet and serenity found on the water. Without the noise of a motor, a stream paddler may get close to deer, eagles, frogs, and basking turtles. It's also a great way to sneak up on elusive fish that seem to keep moving to areas you can't navigate in a motorized boat.

There are undeniable health benefits associated with paddling a kayak or a canoe around for a few hours. Paddling will help you to lose weight and tone your muscles, and it's a low impact workout for your entire upper body. Plus the art of keeping your balance is a workout for your core and lower body.

Getting started doesn't have to be expensive; you can rent or borrow a kayak or canoe to see if paddling is something you want to stick with. If storage is a problem, they make inflatable kayaks which are easy to transport and store when not in use. There is a wide range of models to choose from, so you'll need to

do some research as to which type best fits the type of water and difficulty level you wish to participate in.

Having the proper gear will also help contribute to a successful outing on the water. For your safety, a life jacket and shoes should always be worn, and if you try whitewater, wear a helmet. Appropriate clothing

for the weather and water temperature is also important. Wet suits and dry suits should be used in early spring or late fall, and sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat should be worn during the summer months. Take along a first aid kit and a change of clothes packed away in a dry bag. You should keep your cell phone and cameras in a waterproof container just in case of water splash or capsizing. Bring along drinking water and snacks to keep your body energized.

Plan your day in advance, whether you choose to paddle in a pond, lake, or river, and make sure you let someone know where you are going to be. The Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri rivers are the only three navigable rivers in the state, so make sure you have permission to access and paddle on any stretch of privately owned water. For Kansas River paddling, pick up a copy of the Kaw River Access brochure or visit <http://www.kansasriver.org/river-access/river-map> to find locations that are designed for entry and retrieval of kayaks and canoes. Launch difficulty is rated for each access point, and some provide restrooms and picnic areas. Access points on the Arkansas River can be found on the City of Wichita's website or at <http://www.arkriver.org/maps.htm>, and Missouri River access points can be found at <http://www.missouricanoe.org/river-maps/missouri.html>



HAYS BASS CLUB

Looking for a way to become active in bass fishing in northwest Kansas and help youth at the same time? The Hays Bass Club, www.haysbass.com, is the place for you. Devoted to “conservation, youth, fellowship, and friendly competition,” this website shows the reader how to become involved in a fishing community that is about more than just competition.

Click the “Conservation” link, and you’ll see what the organization is doing to improve the resources they use and how to get involved. Click the “Youth” link, and you find area events that help introduce kids to the joys of angling. A calendar of

events connects the viewer to bass tournaments as well as youth events in an area of the state rich with large, productive reservoirs. While I would like to see the “News” link reach out a little beyond the club, the link gives the reader a good overview of past club events, complete with video of the group’s latest Casting Kids clinic. And the “Reports” link does help provide the viewer with timely angling-related news.

A series of Tips and Tricks for Anglers videos, found on the “How To” link, provides great information for those just learning the angling art, as well as those wanting to learn more.

Overall, this is a clean, well-designed site sure to please the anglers of Kansas. Kudos to Hays Bass Club.

BOAT KANSAS

More than 89,000 registered boaters used Kansas waters in fiscal year 2011, and an estimated 10,000 residents have boats registered in other states. This, combined with nonresident boaters from Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma, and other states, means that more than 100,000 recreational boaters enjoy Kansas waters each year. Perhaps you’re ready to be one of them.

If so, you need to visit the KDWPT boating website. Go online to ksoutdoors.com and click the “Boating” link at the top of the page. Here, you find everything you need to know about boating in Kansas, including links to boating education, law enforcement, requirements, the Extreme Outdoor Water Festival, registering your boat, online registration renewal, boating access, boating contacts, other boating links, and more.

If you’re new to boating in Kansas, you may need to take a boating education course before launch. Click the “Boating Education” link to find out.

Most Kansas lakes offer public access facilities and provide excellent opportunities for anglers, swimmers, skiers, sail boaters, power boaters, canoeists, and others. This summer, launch your browser, then launch your boat.



NEW BOBWHITE QUAIL INITIATIVE

KDWPT has launched a new quail restoration initiative aimed at making a difference in declining bobwhite quail populations at a landscape level. The state initiative includes the designation of two large quail management focal areas and as much as \$500,000 of KDWPT wildlife fee funds over five years to attract landowner participation. Additional funding and support are being provided by the National Wild Turkey Federation, Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, Quail Forever, Safari Club International, Kansas Wildlife Federation, and The Nature Conservancy. Primary objectives are a 50 percent increase in bobwhite populations and a 5 percent increase in suitable quail habitat in each focus area.

KDWPT has targeted two regional bobwhite “focal areas” totaling nearly 310,000 acres for restoration over a five-year period. The focal-area strategy reflects the national consensus that working at larger landscape levels rather than on small, scattered projects provides the best opportunity to save the bird – along with a suite of other wildlife species that require the same habitat. Typically, focal areas are anchored by a large tract of public or private land as a core, and efforts are expanded outward to other interested adjacent landowners.

Kansas’ 194,911-acre northern focal area includes parts of Lyon, Wabaunsee, Coffey, and Osage counties and has a bobwhite

habitat management potential of “high,” as rated in the national initiative. The core public lands are the 9,407-acre Melvern Wildlife Area and the 562-acre Lyon State Fishing Lake and Wildlife Area.

The 113,711-acre southern focal area includes parts of Labette and Neosho counties. Its potential for bobwhite habitat management is rated “medium,” but Pitman adds that the additional sources of funding and potential partners available to assist the effort there make it a worthwhile target. Additionally, the public land centerpieces include the new Grand Osage Wildlife Area (formerly the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant) where approximately 9,000 acres will be managed by KDWPT when all the agreements are in place. The southern focal area also includes the 1,320-acre Big Hill Wildlife Area.

KDWPT will assist eligible landowners with enrollment in the appropriate U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) cost-share programs and then cover the landowner share of approved practices with non-federal money.

For more information, call the KDWPT Region 4 Office at 316-683-8069 or read the Kansas Quail Initiative plan, go online to goo.gl/VmdKd. For more information about NBCI, go online to bringbackbobwhites.org.

—Jim Pitman, small game research coordinator, Emporia



Pickled Fish

This recipe is for pickled fish, or pickled fish bellies to be precise. But if I would have given the article that name, you would have just shaken your head and moved on to the next article. But now that I have your attention, maybe I can keep it long enough to go on an adventure that few have taken. If nothing else, it will surely provide plenty of entertainment among friends. But I am not being fair to what some cultures have deemed a delicacy. Pickled fish bellies are far from a staple food in the Midwest, but the adventurous types willing to try it will find it is not only edible but

tasty. It's not something you are going to sit down and eat a pound of like crappie fillets or catfish nuggets. It's more like the occasional pickled egg, Hot Momma, pickled okra or other novelty food items.

Kansas has plenty of fish prime for making pickled fish bellies, including buffalo, drum and carp. And if you're like me, there are days when those fish are all you can catch. So, try taking home two or three and making some pickled fish bellies.

Most ingredients are common to most kitchens. I was able to buy the rest of what I needed for less than \$10.

Although this might sound a little fishy, its pretty tasty and can be a great conversation piece.

Cold Pack Pickled Fish

- 1 quart fish – rib meat from carp, drum fillets (should make around 3 pints)
- 2 medium yellow onions
- 3 cup kosher salt
- 1 cup port wine (white but red will work)
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cup white vinegar (will need more)
- 2 cup water
- 2 Tbsp pickling spice

Cut meat into pieces no thicker than 1/2 inch. In a bowl, place a layer of salt, then place a layer of fish, then cover that layer with salt and repeat until you have used all the fish. Cool in the refrigerator for 24 hours, then rinse the salt off fish. Place rinsed fish in a container and cover with white vinegar. Cool this in refrigerator for 24 hours. In a sauce pan, mix 1 cup port wine, 1 cup sugar, 2 cups vinegar, 2 cups water, and 2 tablespoons of pickling spice and bring to a boil. Clean onions and slice. Once the solution you boiled has cooled, strain out spices. In pint jars create layers of onion and fish until you reach the neck of the jar. Pour cooled solution in the jar until all meat and onion is covered. Place ring and lid on jar and cool in refrigerator 24 hours before eating.



FISHIN' with Mike Miller

Catfish Fancy

I don't fish for catfish much anymore. I guess I got too fancy for them. I moved on to more "glamorous" fish like walleye, crappie, and bass. Some fish on my favorite list are ranked above catfish mostly because of where I catch them. I love smallmouth bass because I often catch them in wild clear-water lakes. Trout are high on the list because I'm usually in the Rocky Mountains when I fish for them. The poor B-list catfish lives just about anywhere, and the word glamorous is never used to describe it. However, there was a time when I was obsessed with catfish. I fished for them almost daily and learned many fishing lessons because of catfish. And the fact that they can live in just about any water should be one of the catfish's most endearing qualities because they are always within reach.

I was a bike-riding, toe-headed 11-year-old when I started my obsession, catching bullheads at the local state fishing lake. I used worms for bait, and the bullheads usually cooperated. While most anglers don't consider a bullhead to be an attractive fish, I distinctly remember one notable fish that glimmered a beautiful brilliant green as I brought it into the shallows. I suppose beauty really is in the eye of the beholder.

I soon graduated to channel catfish. They were more difficult to catch, and I had to use different bait to avoid the bullheads and green sunfish. Channel cats could be finicky, and I tried every bait to catch them, including chicken liver, stink bait, shrimp, beef liver, cut bait and shad sides. Usually the worse a

bait smelled, the better channel cats liked it. And perhaps that affinity for really smelly bait had something to do with our break up. When I was 12, smelling like rotten shad sides for a couple days wasn't a problem. When I was 16, smelling like catfish bait ruined any confidence I had mustered when it came to talking to girls.

My point is that I owe much to catfish, and I feel bad for turning my back on one my first loves. I don't think you can find a lake or stream in Kansas that doesn't have a population of catfish. They grow big, fight hard and often take baits eagerly. They are perfect for young and beginning anglers, but they're fun for all ages. And just to make sure the fishing is great, KDWPT hatcheries produce millions of fry and fingerlings each year to stock into lakes. Try catfish this spring and rediscover what great fun they can be.



Mike Blair photo

PROFILE:

with Mark Shoup

Rick Martin



Rick Martin grew up on an airplane. Well, not exactly. The son of a career Air Force flight engineer, Martin was born in Omaha, Neb., moved all over the U.S., and spent two years in the Philippines while his father was flying medi-vac aircraft out of Vietnam. At the end of the elder Martin's career (including three tours in Vietnam), the family landed in Mountain Home, Idaho, where Martin graduated from high school. From there, Martin went directly to Kansas State University.

"My dad was from Kansas, and after retiring from the Air Force, he went into business with his brother in Salina, so K-State was perfect for me," Martin explains.

One would think that with all that moving from place to place, it would be hard to develop an love for the outdoors, but that was not Martin's case.

"My mom taught my brother and me about outdoors sports such as football, basketball, and baseball, but My dad grew up hunting and fishing, and he passed that passion on to us," says Martin. "I really loved being outdoors with my brother, who was two years younger. Whenever we'd go fishing, he'd catch the first fish, the most fish, the biggest fish, and the last one before we'd leave. And the whole time, he'd be throwing sticks and rocks in the water and not following the techniques Dad taught us, and it irritated the heck out of me. It's still that way. Some people just have the luck, and he did and still does. It's funny now, and we're great friends."

At K-State, Martin had some decisions to make. He started out in pre-forestry, but the school only had a two-year program at the time. In order to continue there, he changed his major to park and resource management/natural resource management.

Martin left school in 1978, and shortly after, he secured a job as a park ranger at Kanopolis State Park, where remains today.

"I really didn't have a strong desire to go into law enforcement," he remembers. "In high school, I never envisioned it, but it just came with the job out here. Besides, I'm a people person, so a park is a great place to be for me. I wanted to work outside, and this allowed me to be where I wanted to be and work toward my ultimate goal of managing the park. Plus, my folks lived in Salina; my wife and I were engaged; and her family farms just outside Salina, so it turned out to be a great location for us."

In 1991, Martin was promoted to state park manager. While law enforcement is still a large part of what he does, other challenges now fulfill him.

"There really are a lot of rewards. Just being able to stay at the same park over the years and knowing that I had a hand in improving it has been rewarding. I like to think that the majority of the changes and decisions I made were for the good of the public. Everything we do is to make visitors to Kanopolis have a better experience. If people see some new facilities or camp-

grounds, they're happy. It's rewarding when we hear people tell us we're doing a good job improving the place."

For Martin, the biggest improvements came with the Parks 2000 Act of 1997, when the Kansas Legislature approved a \$10 million, three-year investment in aging park facilities. "We were able to put in new shower buildings, revamp a bunch of campsites, and build new ones," he explains. "And we added a considerable number of trail miles for hikers, bikers, and equestrians. In fact, we were one of the first parks to have an extensive equestrian campground. Since then, other parks have added them, and we've shared a lot of our ideas with them."

Martin cites his parents as his greatest inspiration in life and in his career, always encouraging him to do his best and pursue his goals. But one agency employee was the most influential.

"Harold Peterson was the park manager when I came on," Martin says. "He was pretty stern, but he let us do our job. I knew what was expected of me and when it was expected, and he was always available to give us guidance. He taught me the ropes."

Martin is affable and self-effacing, and trying nail down his personal accomplishments is difficult. However, there has been a lot of growth at Kanopolis during his tenure, and without necessarily taking credit, you can tell that he is proud of this park. As with most park managers, he is concerned about park funding more than any other issue going into the future.

"I really hope that we can be self-supporting in the future and still provide everything the public needs," he explains. "Probably one of the biggest ways we are addressing this is the cabin program. The income from those is not going to solve all our woes, but it could sure play a pretty big hand if we can get the majority of that income coming into parks. I hope that we can add a few cabins and try a few new things where we could build larger cabins. People are really enjoying them. We have people who camp out here and enjoy it so much that they rent cabins in the fall and winter. I think the cabin program could be a real plus for all our parks."

Like most good family men, however, Martin is most proud of other things. "My biggest accomplishment is being married since 1979 and having three great kids. It just doesn't get much better than that."

For park users, it doesn't get much better than having a caring manager who's been in the park for 34 years.

HUNTING SPOTS

with Marc Murrell

THIS OPENER WON'T BE CROWDED

Opening day of most any hunting season is often crowded with plenty of people anxious to get out. Thousands mark the second Saturday of November down to chase pheasants, while others take vacation on the Wednesday after Thanksgiving for the firearms deer opener. But the start of the squirrel season on June 1 won't be met with the same fan-fare. And chances are even if you hit a public area, you'll have thousands of prime acres all to yourself.

Squirrel hunting obviously doesn't have the huge following as other species. Many older Kansans remember growing up in rural areas where squirrel was regularly on the menu. It was likely popular then more as a grocery supplement than it was for fun. If you tell someone you eat squirrels these days, they look at you sort of funny, ignorant of how delicious squirrel meat is. That ignorance makes squirrel hunting one of our best kept secrets, a great opportunity to get out in the woods, and an even better chance to take a youngster or two along.

Many of Kansas' state-managed public hunting areas are full of squirrels. Any of the areas located in the eastern half of the state are guaranteed to have plenty, and many in western Kansas can have squirrels, as well. Wildlife areas with good

stands of timber and mast-producing trees are most likely to have good squirrel populations, and several that come to mind include Perry, Milford, Tuttle Creek, Pomona, Melvern, Council Grove, Fall River, Hillsdale, Toronto, Clinton, Elk City and Big Hill.

Fox squirrels are the most common species encountered and are found statewide. The gray squirrel is found in the eastern one-third of the state. Fox squirrels are generally larger and more vocal than gray squirrels. The daily bag limit is five, single species or in combination.

Squirrel hunting equipment is simple. A .22 rifle is preferred by many because a well-placed shot doesn't ruin any meat. A four-power scope is an asset, but most shots are taken at 25 yards or less. Youngsters with less steady aim benefit from using a shotgun, and a 20 gauge is ideal. Loaded with No. 6 shot and a modified choke will make it an effective option for killing squirrels and allowing kids to experience success.

The old tried and true method of sitting by mast trees and waiting for squirrels to move is still productive, as is



silently slipping through the timber, doing the same. However, in recent decades calling squirrels has caught on, and it's the "X Games" version of modern-day squirrel hunting because of the excitement it adds. And for under \$20, you can have all the goodies you need to call them close.

Calling squirrels involves quietly slipping into the woods. Once in a prime area, a hunter grabs a limb and starts thrashing it while blowing on the squirrel distress whistle or call. It's supposed to simulate a predator that has caught a young squirrel and the young squirrel's distress calls. Adult squirrels often sound off or come running to check out the commotion. It's amazing how well it works, and several squirrels are often shot from the same location without moving.

If you try it in the coming months, go early, right at first light before it gets hot. Wear a long-sleeved t-shirt and apply plenty of bug spray to your socks, pants and exposed flesh to thwart blood-sucking mosquitoes and ticks. If you don't like spiders, beware as they're abundant, too, but don't pose any real danger to hunters.

Despite these nuisances, squirrel hunting is a great way to spend a couple hours in the morning enjoying Kansas' outdoors. And the best news is you likely won't run into another hunter on your way to a five-squirrel limit, even on opening day.



IT'S GOING ON AT KANSAS STATE PARKS

From windswept canyons to Ozark forests, Kansas state parks offer something for everyone. You can stay in a comfortable, climate-controlled cabin or pitch a tent on the prairie. I have it on good authority (my kids) that stargazing from a sleeping bag atop a picnic table, with your friends close around, is an awesome experience. We have launched our Outdoor Recreation Management System (ORMS) to better manage our resources. Most facilities are open. Various wildflowers will be blooming throughout the season, animals will be active, and our expansive Kansas skies produce glorious sunsets.

Wilson State Park will host the Fat Tire Festival mountain bike race May 5-6. A Women on Target shooting (archery, rifle, muzzleloader and shotgun) education event occurs at Tuttle Creek State Park's Fancy Creek Range on May 12. The Eastern Kansas Arabian Association hosts a competitive trail ride at Hillsdale State Park on May 18-20. The Hell Creek Hoedown bluegrass festival is at Wilson State Park on June 6-10. This long-standing event has become a tradition for many. Tuttle Creek State Park's Country Stampede music extravaganza occurs June 21-24, while for those who prefer a quieter activity, Glen Elder State Park hosts the Governor's Cup Walleye fishing tournament that same weekend.



Many of our parks, as well as community parks, will host OK Kids days during May and June. Fishing tournaments, outdoor education classes of all kinds, trail rides and runs, historical reenactments, antique car shows, family reunions, campfire talks and more make for an outdoor season where anyone can find an activity. For a more complete, up-to-date list of events near you, check our website at <http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/KDWPT-Info/KDWPT-Events>.

Schools often bring classes to the parks on end-of-school outings, so many kids will bring home information on local events. Sometimes, with tight school budgets, our staff will share the park experience with the school via nature talks and exhibits. We cooperate with local parks and recreation agencies to coordinate events and activities.

Of course, be mindful of your surroundings and obey common sense safety and courtesy rules. Park staff is happy to answer questions regarding what those rules are. We also offer educational brochures and books if you need more in-depth information. Many of our parks offer naturalist talks or entertainment programs at various times.

Opportunities to get outside, get moving and get in touch with our Earth and yourself abound in Kansas. Your Kansas state parks are ready for you. Come visit.

2011 KANSAS HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's (KDWP) Hunter Education Section has announced that Shannon Clarkson, Salina, has been selected the 2011 Kansas Hunter Education Instructor of the Year. Clarkson joined the volunteer hunter education instructor ranks in 1994, adding bowhunter education certification in 1997.

"Shannon has worked diligently to prepare young hunters to safely take the fields since 1994, and he works exceptionally well with them," said Greg Salisbury in his nomination of Clarkson. "He stresses safety in live fire, and trail walks are included in each of his classes."

Wishing to better his skills in instructing young students in the technical details of shotgun shooting, Clarkson has taken the National Rifle Association (NRA) Shotgun Training Course. In addition, he holds certifications as an NRA range safety officer and a muzzleloader instructor, as well as training as a National Bowhunter Education Foundation treestand safety instructor.

"Shannon encourages and tutors his fellow instructors to do everything he does," Salisbury added. "He is the prime recruiter of new instructors in this area, assisting with new instructor orientation workshops in Salina and surrounding counties."

Clarkson has been an active member of the Kansas Hunter Education Instructor Association (KHEIA) for many years and is the association's sitting president. The KHEIA is instrumental in securing locations for instructor workshops, staffing the registration table at the statewide instructor academy (held once every three years), and purchasing pellet gun ranges made available for use by all instructors in their programs.

In addition to his involvement in hunter education, Clarkson is deeply involved in community activities, including school events with his sons and with the local kennel club with Spark, his Nova Scotia duck tolling retriever. Clarkson is a Cub Scout master and an assistant Webelos den leader in a Salina Cub Scout Pack. He serves on a new committee attempting to develop a public shooting range in Saline County and instructs conceal carry classes in Salina.

For his efforts, Clarkson will receive a collector Henry Golden Boy .22 caliber lever action rifle and a Browning model 322571 knife, made available through the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA), commemorating the 60th Anniversary of hunter education in North America. The set will be presented at the KHEIA Annual Meeting in June. —*Monica Bickerstaff*

Go With The Flow

with Mark VanScoyoc



Pistolgrip

The Other Anglers Out There

When people think about streams, rivers, reservoirs or other bodies of water while planning their warm-weather activities, they are mainly focused on catching fish with various baits and lures. However, another lesser-known animal also preparing its “lures” is the freshwater mussel.

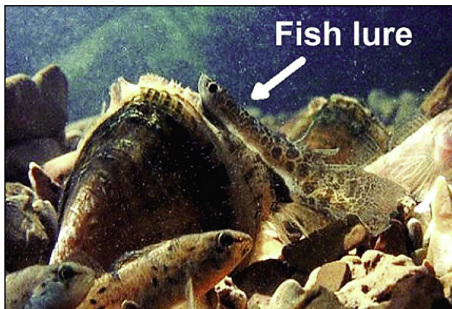
Kansas is host to approximately 40 species of freshwater mussels that exhibit breeding behaviors as unique and colorful as their names and appearances. Species

such as the maple leaf, pocketbook, pistolgrip, butterfly, fawnsfoot, elktoe and other descriptively-named mussels employ fleshy “lures” that look like small minnows, and they even move these lures to mimic the actions of real-life minnows. Once a larger predator fish takes the bait, it then becomes a host to the many glochidia, or immature mussels, that attach to its gill filaments. As these glochidia mature, they drop from the host fish to the bottom of the water body or stream and begin life on their own. Research has shown that different mussel species prefer specific fish species as host to these immature mussels. For example, the maple leaf mussel’s preferred host is the flathead catfish.

Mussels are important in our river systems for various reasons. The shells can provide important spawning and hiding habitat for various fish and insects. As filter feeders, mussels are pri-

mary consumers of plankton and very important in the food web of large rivers. They convert and accumulate nutrients from plankton and bacteria into proteins directly used by fish and other invertebrates. Since they are fairly sensitive to changes in habitat and water quality, they do a good job of showing changes in environmental conditions.

As you’re enjoying the warmer spring weather, keep a lookout for mussel shells along the banks of rivers, streams, and ponds. As a mussel ages, it will lay down growth rings, much like annular rings on trees. Counting these rings and looking at their overall condition can give you a good approximation of the age of the animal showing you how long they’ve been around. Hopefully, these fascinating creatures are here to stay.



WILSON STATE PARK DETOUR

A short detour will be required to visit the Wilson Reservoir area and the Post Rock Scenic Byway this travel season. Beginning in early April and ending in the fall, the I-70/K-232 interchange (Exit 206, Wilson/Lucas) will undergo reconstruction, but K-232 will still be accessible. K-232 leads to Wilson Reservoir, Wilson State Park and Wildlife Area, the Post Rock Scenic Byway, and the cities of Lucas and Wilson.

Between early April and early June, westbound I-70 travelers heading to K-232 will be detoured about 7 miles farther west to Exit 199 (Dorrance), where they can exit, cross I-70, and enter eastbound I-70 to the K-232 exit. During this time, eastbound I-70 travelers can exit at K-232 without a detour.

Between early June and sometime this fall, eastbound I-70 travelers heading to use K-232 will be detoured about 10 miles farther east to Exit 216 (Vesper), where they can exit, cross I-70, and enter westbound I-70 to the K-232 exit. During this time, westbound I-70 travelers can exit at K-232 without a detour.

Throughout the project, K-232 travelers intending to go either direction on I-70 will be detoured in the opposite direction on I-70 to Exit 199 or Exit 216, where they can cross I-70 and re-enter I-70 in their intended direction.

—KDWP News



Fish Squeezer

with Tommie Berger

Wow, here it is spring and most of us are wondering where spring went. We did not have a very tough winter but when spring came along, it felt like we jumped right into summer. Turkeys seemed to be just about on time, but more mushrooms showed up the last week of March. Water temperatures in early April were 10 to 15 degrees above normal. It makes me wonder what the rest of the year might be like.

With the early warm-up in both air and water temperatures, the fish started biting well ahead of schedule, and some even spawned early. Because of that, I had to get my 4-H Sportfishing schedule out a bit early, and we have had some fantastic fishing outings already! Farm pond bass and crappie were way ahead of normal and surprisingly enough, the vegetation in the ponds did not really take off early, so fishing for kids from the shore has been good.

Speaking of 4-H Sportfishing, I might mention that for the past couple of years, 4-H has been conducting a statewide fishing tournament for 4-H youth. The kids catch fish, weigh them on any digital fish scale with a witness, take a picture of the fish, fill out the entry form, and send it in. There are five fish categories – Black Bass, Catfish, Crappie, Sunfish, and Carp. The tournament ends on September 15 each year so that winners can be determined before the fall 4-H achievement banquets are held. Winners in each category, determined by weight, receive a certificate and some type of prize, which might be fishing tackle, fishing books, or fishing apparel. We hope to award a 4-H Sportfishing ball cap to every youngster who participates. I am the tournament director, so all entries need to be sent to me; the information is on the entry forms, and 4-Hers can pick those up on line or through their local extension office.

I took five 4-H youngsters to the Pawnee County Shootout in March, and three of the five qualified for the state competition in archery. Nick Lawson qualified in both recurve and compound; Fritz Berger and Tanner Kubick qualified with their compounds. They plan to go to the state shoot to compete in the fall. These boys will be competing in the Hunting Skills category at the fall state 4-H competition, as well.

Retired But Not Yet Tired

The Outdoor Adventure Camp (OAC) will be held June 3 – 8 at Rock Springs' Camp Wa-Shun-Ga again this year. This will be year 24 for OAC, which is a week-long camp for 10- to 12-year-old youngsters. OAC is not a 4-H event; it is sponsored by the Kansas Wildlife Federation and is open to any youngster who is between 10 and 12 years old. I have assisted with this camp for all of the 24 years, and my wife has been camp coordinator for more than half of them. It is a camp for kids who truly enjoy the outdoors and want to experience shooting sports, fishing, canoeing, and learning about the ecosystem we call Kansas. The kids swim every day, take a field trip to the Milford Nature Center and Fish Hatchery, and end the camp with a friendly Jeopardy Game cabin competition to see who learned the most during the week. The cost of this camp is \$300 for the week. For more information and a brochure, email me at bergkwf@wtciweb.com or call (785) 526-7466, (785) 658-5159 or (785) 524-6112.

This spring, I assisted with the walleye egg-taking operations at Cedar Bluff and Milford reservoirs, spent a weekend at Rock Springs getting some additional shooting sports training, attended a hunter education workshop, and spent some time setting up our 4-H Shooting Sports program in the Post Rock District. I have agreed to be a Master Instructor in the KDWPT Aquatic Education Program, and have two fishing classes scheduled at Becoming an Outdoors Woman program in May. I've heard it said that one is busier in retirement than while working full-time and I am beginning to see that. Still, it is extremely gratifying to see youngsters get outside and learn about hunting, fishing, and shooting skills that could provide them with a lifetime of enjoyment. I challenge each and every one of you to get involved with youngsters and Pass It On.

Oh yeah, summer baseball season starts in May, too, and guess who is the T-ball coach for the umpteenth year. And I got my son Fritz's application in for Colorado elk, so I'll be guiding him on his first archery or muzzleloader hunt in September – mountains here we come.

KDWPT EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism employees have recently been recognized on both regional and national levels by conservation/wildlife management organizations. Natural resource officer Doug Whiteaker was selected as the Shikar Safari Officer of the Year. Tyson Nielson, was selected as Boating Officer of Year and is now eligible for regional recognition by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. At the North American Wildlife Conference, district wildlife biologist Kraig Schultz received the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wings Across America Award for his work on lesser prairie chickens on forest service lands. Also at the North American meeting, Joe Kramer received the Ducks Unlimited Wetland Conservation Award for state and provincial agencies category. At the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies last meeting, Tommie Berger was named Fisheries Biologist of the Year, and Lloyd Fox was named Wildlife Biologist of the Year. All of these employees have represented KDWPT well and deserve congratulations for their work and dedication. – *Keith Sexson, assistant secretary*

Rainbow Trout Record Falls Twice – Again

On March 7, Tony Melkus of Topeka caught the biggest rainbow trout he'd ever laid eyes on. In fact, when he had it weighed on certified scales, Melkus knew his 14.28-pound would be listed in the Kansas record books as the largest rainbow trout ever taken from Kansas waters. He didn't know that before the ink would dry on his state record fish certificate, his record would be broken. On March 10, Nicole Wilson of Topeka caught a rainbow trout eclipsing Melkus' fish, and it now stands as the Kansas state record – at least at this writing.

Wilson's trout was huge, weighing in at 15.43 pounds, more than a pound heavier than Melkus'. Her fish was 33 inches long and had a girth of 19 inches. Both anglers caught their record fish from Lake Shawnee in Topeka. Rainbow trout are stocked in select Kansas waters each winter to provide an alternative fishing opportunity during months when most warm-water sport fish are tough to catch. Apparently, there are some mighty large fish being delivered to Lake

Shawnee. The lake is owned and operated by Shawnee County. It is enrolled in KDWPT's Community Lake Assistance Program, which means that, other than state fishing license requirements, no additional angling fees are charged although to fish for or possess trout during the Nov. 1-April 15 trout season, a KDWPT trout permit is required.

In 2011, a similar story played out. On last April 2 last year, Topekan Bob Lorson caught a 11.02-pound rainbow trout. Just 18 days later, Ed Ames of Tecumseh caught one that weighed 13.65 pounds. While Ames' record only stood 11 months, that's long by Kansas trout record standards. Who knows? There could be a bigger trout swimming, but anglers will have to hurry to catch it this year. Few, if any, of the fish will survive Kansas summer water temperatures.

– KDWPT News



Young Turkey Hunters Find Success At Council Grove

The Council Grove 12th Annual Spring Turkey Hunt was conducted on Saturday, April 7. This year's hunt sought to accommodate area youth ages 11-16. A rainy spring morning did not hamper 15 eager area youngsters the morning of the hunt. By day's end, all of the participants were fortunate to see or hear wild turkeys. Eight of the participants harvested a turkey while others enjoyed encounters with their quarry but were unable to harvest. For those fortunate to harvest, the event was memorable, as each was their first turkey.

The primary goal of this hunt was to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for area youngsters, and to bring together individuals with an interest in spring turkey hunting. This event was designed to pair young hunters with knowledgeable and experienced adult volunteers, in an effort to initiate or further entrench participants into the enjoyable spring pastime of wild turkey hunting.

All participants enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to receive hands-on hunting instruction, turkey hunting gear, and meals. The hunters truly appreciated the efforts of all involved and volunteers were rewarded with many thanks.

Area KDWPT staff would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their assistance with another successful event:

Organizations – The National Wild Turkey Federation, The Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation, The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, The U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers, and Cabela's of Wichita.

Individuals – Randy Benteman, Marvin Peterson, Brandon Houck, Jared McJunkin, Tyson Powell, Spencer Tomb, Allan Cashman, Mike Wells, Mark Hawkins, Phillip Buttrey, Jim Evans, Jason Harris, Nanci Sigle, Martin Godlove, Josh Patry, Alden Neff, Derek Jackson, and Trent and Frank Siegle.

Special thanks must also be extended to numerous landowners for their generosity in allowing youth to hunt turkeys on their property.

Volunteers interested in helping with next years hunts can contact: Brent Konen – Council Grove Wildlife Area Manager, (620) 767-5900. – *Brent Konen*



The best times of your life just got less expensive



photo courtesy of Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

She'll be 16 before you know it and off to college in the blink of an eye. Don't miss a single chance to be on the water with your daughter by purchasing a multi-year youth fishing license.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism offers resident multi-year hunting and fishing licenses for youth 16-21. For a one-time investment of \$42.50, you can give your teenager a hunting or fishing license that will last until they turn 21. A combination multi-year hunting/fishing license is \$72.50. (Regular one-year licenses are \$20.50, so if you buy your daughter the multi-year fishing license for her sixteenth birthday, you'll save more than a hundred bucks!)

And you'll be investing in more than time with your teenager. Your license dollars help fund Kansas' wildlife and fisheries management and conservation programs.

You can purchase a multi-year youth license wherever licenses are sold, through the website www.kdwpt.state.ks.us or by calling 620-672-5911.

Resident multi-year licenses are perfect for:

- ✓ Birthdays
- ✓ Graduations
- ✓ Holidays
- ✓ Special celebrations



2012 Sportsmen's

TURKEY

2012 FALL TURKEY:

- Season: Oct. 1 - Nov. 27, 2012 and Dec. 10-31, 2012; and Jan. 14-31, 2013.

BIG GAME

DEER:

- Youth/Persons with Disabilities: Sept. 8-16
- Archery: Sept. 17 - Dec. 31, 2012
- Muzzleloader: Sept. 17 - Sept. 30, 2012
- Early Firearm (Subunit 19) Oct. 13-21, 2012
- Regular Firearm: Nov. 28 - Dec. 9, 2012
- Firearm Extended Whitetail Antlerless Season: Jan.1 - Jan. 13, 2013
- Archery Extended Whitetail Antlerless Season (DMU 19 only): Jan. 14 - Jan. 31, 2013
- Special Extended Firearms Whitetail Antlerless Season: Jan. 14 - Jan. 20, 2013 (Open for unit 7, 8 and 15 only.)

ELK (residents only)

Outside Fort Riley:

- Muzzleloader: Sept. 1 - 30, 2012
- Archery: Sept. 17 - Dec. 31, 2012
- Firearm: Nov. 28 - Dec. 9, 2012 and Jan.1 - March 15, 2013

On Fort Riley:

- Muzzleloader and archery: Sept. 1-30, 2012
 - Firearm Season for Holders of Any-Elk Permits: Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2012
- Antlerless Only
- Firearm First Segment: Oct. 1-31, 2012
 - Firearm Second Segment: Nov. 1-30, 2012
 - Firearm Third Segment: Dec. 1-31, 2012

Antelope

- Firearm: Oct. 5-8, 2012
- Archery: Sept. 22-30 & Oct. 13-31, 2012
- Muzzleloader: Oct. 1-8, 2012

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

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

- Season: Sept.1 - Oct. 31 and Nov. 3-11, 2012
- Daily bag limit: 15
- Possession limit: 30

EARLY TEAL

- High Plains Season: To be set
- Low Plains Season: To be set
- Daily bag limit: 4
- Possession limit: 8

EXOTIC DOVE

(Eurasian collared and ringed turtle doves only)

- Season: Nov. 20, 2012 - Feb. 28, 2013
- Daily bag limit: No limit
- Possession limit: No limit

RAIL (Sora and Virginia)

- Season: Sept. 1 - Nov 9, 2012
- Daily bag limit: 25
- Possession limit: 25

SNIPE

- Season: Sept. 1 - Dec. 16, 2012
- Daily bag limit: 8
- Possession limit: 16

WOODCOCK

- Season: Oct. 13 - Nov. 26, 2012
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

SANDHILL CRANE

- Season: Nov. 7, 2012 - Jan. 3, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

Calendar

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

To be set

FURBEARERS

TRAPPING

- Season: Nov. 14, 2012 - Feb. 15, 2013
Badger, bobcat, mink, muskrat, opossum, raccoon, swift fox, red fox, gray fox, striped skunk, weasel.

RUNNING

- Season: March 1 - Nov. 1, 2012

BEAVER TRAPPING

- Season Dates (statewide):
Nov. 14, 2012 - March 31, 2013

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

PRAIRIE CHICKEN

- Early Season (East Unit): Sept. 15 - Oct. 15, 2012
- Regular Season (East and Northwest Units):
Nov. 17, 2012 - Jan. 31, 2013
- Regular Season (Southwest Unit):
Nov. 17 - Dec. 31, 2012
- Daily Bag Limit: 2 (East and Northwest Units)
1 (Southwest Unit)
- Possession Limit: twice daily bag

PHEASANTS

- Season: Nov. 10, 2012 - Jan. 31, 2013
- Youth Season: Nov. 3-4, 2012
- Daily bag limit: 4 cocks in regular season, 2 cocks in youth season

QUAIL

- Season: Nov. 10, 2012 - Jan. 31, 2013
- Youth Season: Nov. 3 - 4, 2012
- Daily Bag Limit Quail: 8 in regular season, 4 in youth season

SMALL GAME ANIMALS

SQUIRREL

- Season: June 1, 2012 - Feb. 29, 2013
- 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, 2012 - March 10, 2013
- Daily bag/Possession Limit: No Limit

FISHING SEASONS

BULLFROG

- July 1 - Oct. 31, 2012
- Daily creel limit: 8
- Possession limit: 24

FLOATLINE FISHING

- July 15 - Sept. 15, 2012
- Area open: Hillsdale, Council Grove, Tuttle Creek, Kanopolis, John Redmond, Toronto, Wilson and Pomona reservoirs.

HANDFISHING (flathead catfish only)

- June 15-August 31, 2012
- Area open: Arkansas River, Kansas River and federal reservoirs 150 yards from beyond the dam upstream to the end of the federal property.
- Daily creel limit: 5
- Special permit required

PADDLEFISH SNAGGING

- March 15-May 15, 2012
- Daily creel limit: 2
- Season limit: 6 (Permit required)



NIGHT SHINE

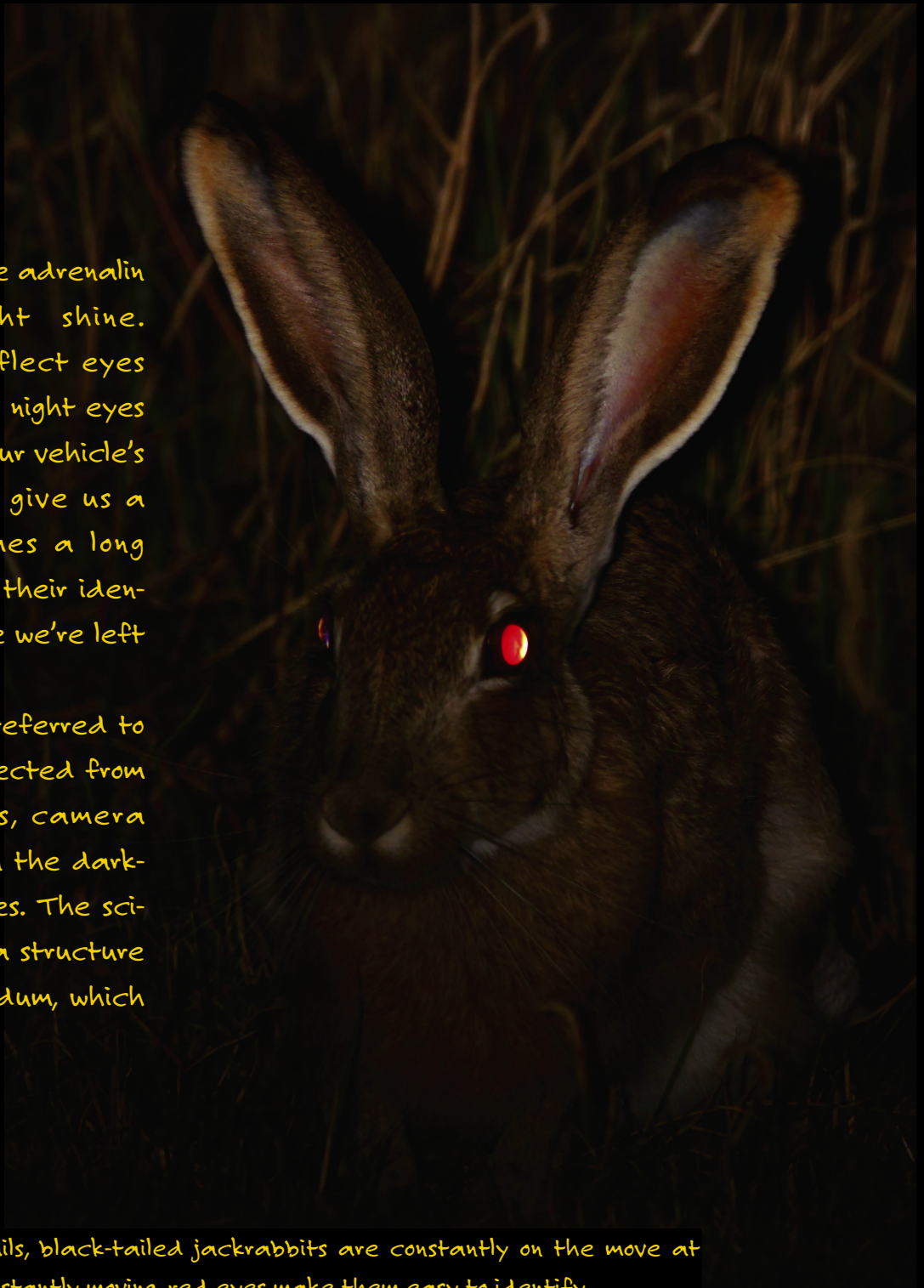
text and photos by Bob Gress
director, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita



For more 30 years, the author has been fighting to get rid of eyeshine and red-eye in his wildlife photos. To keep from showing eye reflection in flash photography, it's necessary to increase the distance between the flash and the camera lens. A variety of flash brackets can help with this. For this article, in his attempt to capture eyeshine, Gress attached flashes and powerful flashlights directly to his telephoto lens. He's still cleaning duct tape residue off his equipment.

We've all felt the adrenalin rush of night shine. Headlights reflect eyes and we tense, hoping the night eyes won't try to escape into our vehicle's path. Sometimes they give us a quick glance, sometimes a long stare. We wonder about their identity, but most of the time we're left with a mystery.

Night shine, commonly referred to as eyeshine, can be reflected from headlights, flashlights, camera flashes and sometimes in the darkness beyond our campfires. The science of eyeshine lies in a structure called the tapetum lucidum, which



Like cottontails, black-tailed jackrabbits are constantly on the move at night. The constantly moving, red eyes make them easy to identify.

During the day, badgers sleep deep in their burrows and are rarely encountered. At night, if you are quiet, they'll sometimes approach a light to satisfy their strong curiosity.



is Latin for "bright tapestry." This layer of tissue in the eyes of many animals lies behind, or sometimes within, the retina. It reflects light back through the retina, making more light available to the photoreceptors. In low-light conditions, this improves vision for many nocturnal animals. The human eye has no tapetum lucidum and no eyeshine. However, the red-eye effect in photos, caused by blood vessels in our eyes, may resemble eyeshine.

Night eyes can show a variety of colors, including white, blue, green, yellow, red, pink, gold and silver. Each species of animal usually show the same color. However, these colors can vary, depending on the angle of light, and the color of our light beam. Halogen, incandescent, fluorescent, metal halide, xenon and LED lamps can all produce different colors of eye reflection.

If you shine a flashlight at an animal, the reflection may be bright if your light source is close to your eyes. Move the light an arm's length away and the eyeshine may dim or completely disappear. Consequently, you may be standing next to a person only a few steps away and one of you will see eyeshine while the other does not. The



Eastern cottontails have brilliant red eyes and are very active at night. They'll often freeze in position under the beam of a floodlight.

Following is a list of eyeshine colors and the animals that might be watching you. Notice some species show more than one color.

- **Silver or white:** spiders, foxes, deer and some fish like walleye
- **Blue:** horses, cows, sheep, goats, domestic kittens, coyotes and badgers
- **Green:** bullfrogs, bobcats, coyotes, deer and black-footed ferrets
- **Yellow:** domestic cats, dogs, foxes, cows, deer, skunks, opossums and raccoons
- **Gold:** dogs
- **Orange:** sheep, opossums and flying squirrels
- **Red:** rabbits, rodents, porcupines, foxes, owls, woodcocks and nightjars
- **Rainbow:** bullfrogs



Swift foxes are animals of western Kansas. Their catlike pupils set their night eyes apart from other animals of the shortgrass prairies.

best lights for seeing eyeshine are headlamps which position the light source closely to your eyes.

It's a challenge to identify animals at night totally by the color of their eyes. For example, deer eyes may appear to be silver, green or yellowish. To assist in identifying animals in the darkness, notice the color of the eyes but also the distance between the eyes, the height above the ground, the speed at which the animal may move, and the type of running gait.

Among fish, the eyeshine of walleye is the most easily observed. Even in daylight, a caught walleye's eyes reflect like no other fish.

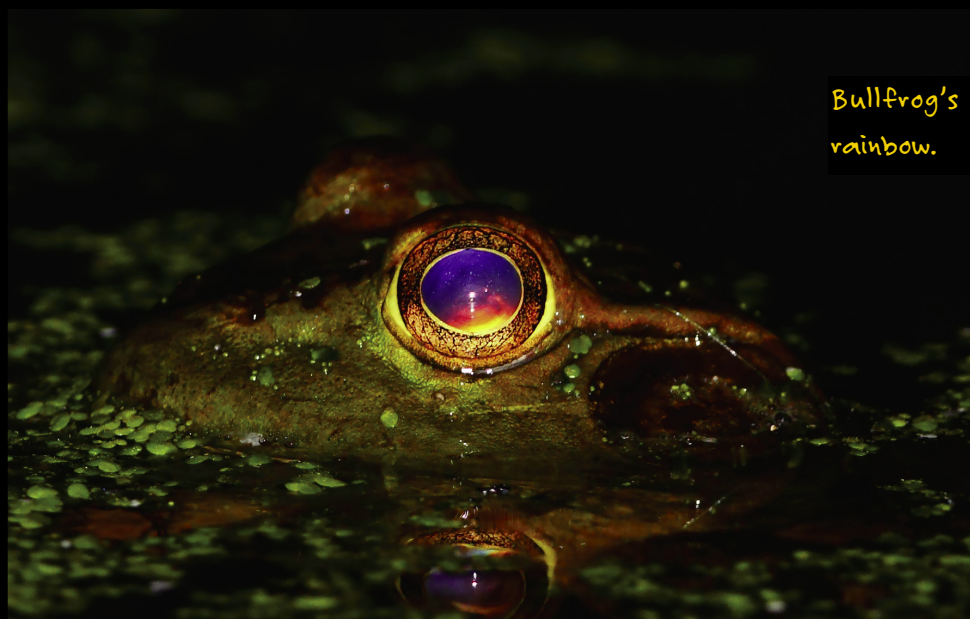


Ever wonder what it would be like to have night vision like some of our wild neighbors? Try using binoculars at night. Not only will this give us super vision like a pronghorn, but binoculars will also gather more light and make it easier to see. The next time you are out for a night hike, put on your headlamp, take along your binoculars and look into the mystery of night shine. 🦋

Spotlighting and the law: Make sure you leave all firearms at home if watching wildlife at night. It's illegal to spotlight wildlife with firearms in your vehicle!



Spiders, like this wolf spider, have tiny eyes with intense white eye-shine that can be seen from great distances. In areas with lots of spiders the ground appears to be littered with diamonds.



Bullfrog's eyes create a night shine rainbow.





Art Of The Call

text and photos by Ken Taylor
freelance writer/photographer, Overland Park

Aaron Wingert builds turkey calls out of Kansas woods that are as functional as they are beautiful. Gov. Sam Brownback carried one of his latest creations during the Governor's Turkey Hunt in April.

When Gov. Sam Brownback headed to the turkey woods for the annual Kansas Governor's One Shot Turkey Hunt this spring, he had a very unique call tucked away in his turkey vest – a custom turned friction call and striker, fashioned from native Kansas Osage orange and black walnut, harvested and turned by native Kansas artisan Aaron Wingert. A call that is all Kansas.

Wingert is the owner of Wingert's Woodworks Custom Game Calls, a one man shop in Mission, specializing in custom-turned game calls. Wingert fashions a variety of duck and goose calls, including a unique duck whistle, but his specialty is custom turned friction turkey calls. He began making calls for one simple reason: the calls he found on the shelf, even the expensive ones, lacked the craftsmanship he was looking for.

"Store bought calls were ugly,"

Wingert jokes. "With my background in woodworking, I knew that I could make a better call than I could buy."

His love of woodworking and love of the hunt married perfectly in the art of call making. He played around with style and sound, working to create a call that is uniquely his, a call he is willing to put his name on. Wingert says, "I have filled trash cans with calls that weren't quite right. If I wouldn't put my name on it, I wouldn't send it to a customer."

The drive for perfection is evident in all of his work. Wingert is known for the precise fit and finish of his products. "Sanding marks drive me insane," Wingert says. He meticulously finishes every part of his calls. Even the insides of the sound holes, a part that most wood turners ignore and most customers would never notice, are meticulously sanded and finished. But Wingert insists, "The sound of the call is most important. You can make a beautiful call that sounds terrible. I want realism." Wingert describes that sound as a realistic yelp—a note that "rolls over," creating natural hen sounds.

Every call that Wingert makes

receives that attention to detail, and each call is custom made to the customer's specifications. "I do not have calls on the shelf ready to ship," Wingert says, "I want my customer involved in the process. An average call may take three to four weeks to produce, and I want the customer involved in every step."

Every decision made affects the sound of the call: the density of the wood, the choice of surface material, the type of soundboard. "In call making, everything affects everything," adds Wingert. The selection process is limitless. Wingert has made calls from nearly every variety of domestic and

exotic wood, including calls made from composite decking materials and Corian, a material typically used for kitchen countertops. He also uses slate, glass and anodized aluminum striking surfaces, each adding a unique element to the call.

The governor's call is topped with an etched anodized aluminum striking surface. Wingert considers aluminum to be the most versatile of the surfaces he works with. According to Wingert, the governor's call will be able to softly chirp and purr like a hen early in the morning, and later in the afternoon reach out across a field and grab a gobbler's atten-



Wengert works on the lathe to produce his latest creation. He has made calls using a variety of woods, including Osage orange and walnut, but he has even made calls from composite decking material and Corian, a material used for countertops.


tion.

Wingert's calls have been field tested by hunters and guides across the country. "Nothing makes me happier than hearing about a customer who has taken a bird using one of my calls," says Wingert. Framed on the wall of Wingert's shop is a note from a customer Wingert is especially proud of, Dr. James Kennamer, Chief Conservation Officer for The National Wild Turkey Federation. "When I opened the letter from Dr. Kennamer, a turkey feather floated out," recalls Wingert. Few things have reassured Wingert of the quality of his calls as much as the note from Dr. Kennamer.

The only letter that has meant more to Wingert is one he received after donating a call to the Quantico Injured Military Sportsmen Association. The soldier who received the call and wrote the letter was just eight weeks removed from an injury he endured from an IED explosion in the Middle East when he used Wingert's friction call to take a turkey.

Wingert traveled to Topeka this spring to hand deliver the call to

Governor Brownback (due to campaign ethics laws, the call will be a gift to the state and will remain with the state at the end of the governor's term). As a native Kansan, making a call for the governor is special, but Wingert also has a connection to Governor Brownback.

While he didn't know him personally before he delivered the call, he grew up learning to hunt on Brownback family land. Wingert shared a few stories with the governor as he told him about his call. A call that is all Kansas. 



A perfectionist, Wingert builds beautiful calls. However, he believes that the sound of the call is the most important quality, and he strives for a realistic turkey sound.

Ken Taylor is a free-lance outdoor writer and long-time English teacher and football coach. He has spent the past eleven years at Blue Valley North High School, where he is the department chair for communication arts and teaches advanced placement English. Taylor also hosts a weekly radio show with Brian Wright called "The Outdoor Guys," which is broadcast on KCTE 1510 in Kansas City.

Protecting Kansas Waters Wild-caught Bait Regulations



Joe Tomelleri illustrations

New fishing regulations designed to prevent further spread of dangerous, non-native aquatic nuisance species will change the way Kansas anglers use live fish for bait.

*Don't believe these species pose a threat?
Here are some facts:*

Zebra Mussels

- One adult female zebra mussel can produce 1 million eggs per year.
- Colonies of zebra mussel attach to all types of living and nonliving surfaces, creating densities as high as 1 million per square meter and layers up to 6 inches thick.
- Economic impact to municipal water suppliers, power plants, and other water-related businesses are \$1 billion per year.
- Zebra mussels can filter up to a liter of water per day, eating plankton, which is important food for larval sport fish, bait fish and native mussels.
- The feeding habits of zebra mussels make lakes more susceptible to dangerous algae blooms, and their shells cut the feet of waders and swimmers.
- Zebra mussel larvae are microscopic and free-floating in the water and are easily transported in undrained boats and minnow buckets.

White Perch

- White perch are associated with declines in walleye and white bass populations.
- White perch can quickly overpopulate and become stunted.
- White perch can out-compete more desirable sport fish species for food and space.

Asian Carp

- Asian carp are prolific under the right conditions, and they out-compete desirable fish for food and space.
- Asian carp are filter feeders and do not have the potential to become sport fish.
- Silver carp can weigh as much as 60 pounds, and because of their habit of leaping out of the water as a boat passes over, pose a physical danger to boaters and anglers.

More than two years ago, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) biologists began to consider regulations that could help protect Kansas waters from invasive aquatic nuisance species (ANS). Of all the threats our native aquatic species and sport fishing traditions face, these exotic

invaders may be the most serious.

Biologists have been monitoring species such as zebra mussels, white perch and Asian carp. Prior to pursuing regulatory action, KDWP began a concerted effort to educate anglers and boaters about the dangers of moving water and fish among water bodies. Despite these efforts, additional waters

became infested each year.

In 2006 biologists began to evaluate the risk baitfish movement poses to our aquatic resources. During that review, it was discovered that wild fish were moved from numerous locations and sometimes the fish being moved were ANS. In other cases, the moved fish were transported in

zebra mussel infested water. Further complicating the issue, Asian carp were found in rural farm ponds, and wild fish were routinely moved into farm ponds from ANS waters, indicating farm ponds are not immune to ANS exposure.

In 2007, KDWPT staff developed a draft baitfish regulation proposal. Several concerns were identified, but principally, staff were concerned that new regulations would not be accepted by the public, and that more stringent regulation would alter a tradition of collecting live fish for bait. A human dimension project was initiated to better understand the public's values associated with baitfish collection, transport, use, and resource utilization. Surveys showed that a majority of anglers used live fish as bait and purchased baitfish from a commercial dealer. When anglers chose to collect baitfish from the wild, a majority of anglers transported baitfish to their fishing destination and

were apt to release remaining fish at the end of the fishing trip. Furthermore, many anglers could not correctly identify species commonly caught and used as bait in Kansas. This information provided a basis to determine the risk of ANS spread from the collection and transport of wild-caught bait and to quantify the number of anglers affected by a restriction on wild-caught bait collection and transport.

Beyond identifying risk, KDWPT staff wanted to determine the acceptability of certain regulatory actions. Three regulatory options were proposed to survey recipients: ban all wild-caught bait, restrict bait to the water where taken, or do nothing. Respondents indicated a restriction on the use of wild-caught baitfish to the water where collected was the most acceptable option. When asked their opinion about the likelihood that collection of baitfish from the wild would cause the accidental movement of ANS, 63 per-

cent indicated some likelihood of spread. When asked their opinion about the likelihood that draining water from boats and other equipment after use in zebra mussel infested waters would prevent zebra mussel spread, 70 percent indicated some likelihood that the prevention of zebra mussel spread could be attained through the draining of water.

In addition to wild-caught bait, the risk associated with the use of commercial bait was evaluated. When bait shops were visited, staff discovered illegal species and diseased fish being sold. It was necessary to take action to assure that "clean" fish were being sold and wild-caught bait fish were as "clean" as practical. Understanding that not everyone would support the changes, taking action to protect Kansas from the harm of ANS and preserving outdoor recreation for the future was the best choice for the department.

Considering the risk analysis and angler option survey results, the process of crafting new regulations began. Draft regulations were developed with input from KDWPT staff (three interdivisional committees), Kansas anglers, commercial bait dealers, commercial bait distributors, the Kansas Aquaculture Association, and the Kansas Natural Resources Sub-cabinet: VHS task force. There was disagreement amongst the groups how best to develop the regulations, but clearly, the following issues needed to be addressed:

- **The sale of non-native and diseased bait;**
- **hitchhikers in commercial bait water;**
- **movement of ANS with wild-caught aquatic species;**
- **release of live baits; and**
- **spread of water-born contaminants.**



Mike Blair photo

Moving water and wild-caught bait fish was determined to be a high-risk factor in the spread of aquatic nuisance species. The new regulations allow wild-caught bait fish to be used only in the stream or lake where they were caught.

Regulation changes for 2012

K.A.R. 115-7-3:

Use it where you catch it.

Wild-caught bait fish may be used on the body of water where taken. If taken on a flowing stream or river, the wild-caught bait fish shall not be transported upstream across any dam or natural barrier.

K.A.R. 115-7-10:

No live fish from ANS waters.

No person may possess any live fish upon departure from any designated ANS water.

K.A.R. 115-8-12:

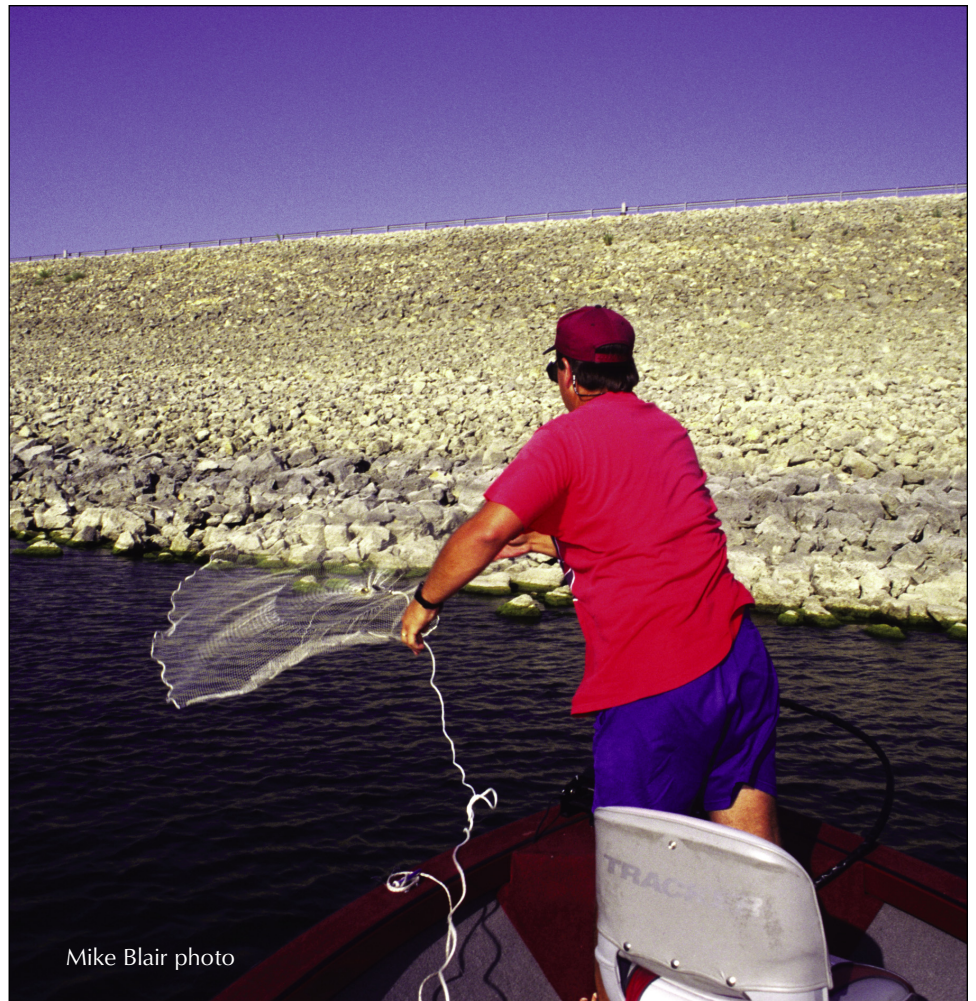
Don't dump bait.

Wildlife may be stocked or released on department lands or waters, navigable publicly owned rivers, and federal reservoirs only as authorized.

K.A.R. 115-30-13:

Drain water.

The livewells and bilges shall be drained and the drain plugs removed from all vessels being removed from the waters of the state before transport on any public highway of the state.



Using a cast net in reservoirs to catch gizzard shad is still legal. However, those shad can only be used in the waters where they were caught.

Summary

The new regulation changes relate to LIVE baits only and do not replace previously adopted bait (number, species, and collection technique) regulations. A simple way to sum up the changes is to remember a few statements:

Only use live bait in the water where collected. If bait is captured on a lake, you can use it in that lake. If you capture it on a stream, you can use it anywhere downstream from the collection location, on the same stream.

If fishing in a water that contains zebra mussels, Asian carp, or white perch, all fish must be dead prior to

leaving.

All water in livewells and bilges must be drained prior to transport by removing the drain plug.

Anglers can still purchase and use bait from a permitted bait dealer statewide. KDWPT is inspecting bait shops for compliance of legal species of sale, disease-free status, and secure water.

Despite the effort expended by staff to develop regulations that were effective, understandable, consistent, and enforceable, the adopted regulations have been interpreted in a manner that may create confusion. Consider the intent of these rules when considering particular situations. The principles behind the regulatory changes follow the longstanding CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY recommen-

dations. The goal is to prevent the spread of ANS, while allowing for the safe use of our aquatic resources. Generally speaking these are the rule changes:

- **To allow anglers to use bait in the water where caught;**
- **to require the draining of untreated water when leaving. ANS spread can be prevented when the water is eliminated prior to transport;**
- **to disallow the dumping of fish and bait into waters in which they did not originate;**
- **to prevent ANS transport when departing ANS designated waters;**
- **and to ensure bait shops are ANS and disease-free.**



Mike Blair photo

Seining baitfish from streams is a popular tradition among Kansas anglers. Under the new regulations, those bait fish can only be used within the stream where they were seined and cannot be moved upstream above a any dam or barrier.

Scenarios:

Below is a list of specific scenarios to help you determine the legality of a particular fish movement. As you review the scenarios, you may discover areas where the intent of the rule is seemingly compromised by the language/interpretation of the rule. An extensive review of these regulations is anticipated in the coming year to streamline regulatory intent with interpretation.

Can I collect bait at a reservoir/lake and then transport in a car to the other side of the lake to use?

Yes. Caution: If it is ANS designated water (an area with zebra mussels, Asian carp, or white perch), the rules are different. No live fish may be possessed upon departure from the ANS designated water. That means you can use live fish caught at that water, but if you leave the property of the person or entity owning land surrounding that

water, the fish must be dead first. This allows you to drive from the boat ramp to the fish cleaning station or campsite only to return directly to the lake at a later time, provided you do not leave the property. If you can get from one side of the lake to the other without leaving the property, the transport is legal.

Can I collect bait at a lake and then use it below the dam in the stream or spillway?

No. The rule specifically states, wild-caught bait fish may be used as live bait only within the pool of the lake or impoundment where taken.

Can I collect bait in the stream/river and use as LIVE bait in the downstream impoundment?

No. Bait collected in the stream/river above a reservoir, cannot be used in the downstream reservoir. This was an oversight in the regulation development and we intend to amend this in 2013.

Where can I use LIVE stream/river caught bait?

Bait fish taken from a flowing stream can be used in any flowing portion of that stream provided an upstream crossing of a dam or natural barrier does not occur.

Can I collect bait from a pond and take it to the lake or stream?

No. Wild-caught bait fish shall only be used on the body of water where taken.

Can I collect bait from a private water fishing impoundment?

Yes. To determine the legality of this movement, consider the impoundment you are using as your bait source.

Is it a private water fishing impoundment as in K.S.A. 32-701 (o)?

Note: Any impoundment with flow or owned by more than one owner does not qualify as a private water fishing impoundment.

K.S.A. 32-701. (o)

(o) "Private water fishing impoundment" means one or more water impoundments:

(1) Constructed by man rather than natural, located wholly within the boundary of the lands owned or leased by the person operating the private water impoundments; and

(2) entirely isolated from other surface water so that the impoundment does not have any connection either continuously or at intervals, except during periods of floods, with streams or other bodies of water so as to permit the fish to move between streams or other bodies of water and the private water impoundments, except that the private water impoundments may be connected with a stream or other body of water by a pipe or conduit if fish will be prevented at all times from moving between streams or other bodies of water and the private water impoundment by screening the flow or by other means.

Can I purchase bait and then transport it to wherever I want?

Yes. New rules have been passed to ensure that bait sold from Kansas commercial bait dealers has been inspected for disease and ANS. When purchasing from these dealers, it is recommended that you get a receipt as all sales of bait fish shall be accompanied with a receipt. Remember, if you are fishing at an ANS designated water, the fish must be dead before you leave the property, even your bait fish.

Do I have to drain all water when leaving an area?

Yes. Water must be drained and the drain plug removed from all boat bilges and livewells prior to transport on a public road. You can take water away in a bucket, but make sure it does not contain any illegal wildlife such as zebra mussel larvae (veligers). It is against state and federal law to possess, import, and transport live invasive species (K.A.R. 115-18-10). A good rule of thumb would be to not take water away with you, especially when leaving an



Mark Shoup photo

Certified bait dealers can sell specific bait fish species, including black bullhead, bluegill, common carp, fathead minnow, golden shiner, goldfish, green sunfish, and yellow bullhead that can be used anywhere in Kansas.

ANS designated water. In 2006 biologists looked at the number of zebra mussel veligers in a typical livewell/bilge system. It was discovered that boats leaving a reservoir that contained zebra mussels could have spread 468-975 veligers per boat by not draining.

The rule says I cannot possess live fish upon departure from any ANS designated water. What is considered dead?

Fish cannot be alive. That means the fish must look and act dead. We recommend that you cut the fish, pack the fish on ice, or haul away in a dry container.

A good technique is to freeze tap water in milk jugs and use them to keep your harvested fish fresh when hauling them home.

What do I do with my unused bait?

Do not release the bait into the water. Dispose of the bait on dry ground or in an approved bait receptacle.

All of these regulations were implemented to protect our fisheries and aquatic resources. However, none will be effective unless boaters and anglers comply. ♡



Fishing Has No Boundaries!

text and photos by Calvin Mabry
El Dorado

Twelve years ago, a group of dedicated volunteers established a Butler County Chapter of Fishing Has No Boundaries. The Wheatland Fishing Has No Boundaries group has been providing fishing opportunities to disabled anglers ever since. Their main event takes place on El Dorado Lake the first full weekend in September.

For most of us, the desire to go fishing is satisfied by simply driving a short distance to one of the many reservoirs, rivers, state or community fishing lakes, or farm ponds available across the state. But for 56 million Americans and thousands of Kansans, taking advantage of these wonderful opportunities is a major undertaking, requiring assistance from others, specialized, adaptive equipment, as well as transportation to and from the fishing site. What so many of us take for granted can be extremely difficult or even impossible for many with a disability. This is where the Wheatland Fishing Has No Boundaries (WFHNB) organization comes in. For the past decade, members of this nonprofit organiza-

tion have conducted an annual event at Bluestem Point on El Dorado Lake, helping people with disabilities enjoy a weekend of fishing, camping, and other exciting activities.

Fishing Has No Boundaries (FHNB) began in Hayward, Wis. in 1988, and the first event was held there on the Chippewa Flowage. From that start almost a quarter century ago, FHNB has grown to 23 chapters in 23 states with several more in the works. The goal of the El Dorado event is to provide recreational fishing opportunities for all persons with disabilities regardless of age, race, gender, or disability. The participants at El Dorado Lake this past September were represented by both genders, several

ages, a wide range of disabilities, and differed in age from five years old to 75.

WFHNB was established in 2000, when a group of Butler County volunteers met with representatives from the National FHNB to start a Kansas chapter. Each year since, the event has been held at El Dorado Lake the last full weekend of September. Another purpose of the event is to educate the community about people with disabilities and how assistive technology can help all enjoy safe recreational opportunities. Volunteers helping with this event learn about the problems facing persons with disabilities. They will learn about the importance of adaptive fishing equipment and accessible boat docks, but most



Lots of helping hands ensure anglers are safely transferred from docks to boats. Fishing Has No Boundaries (FHNB) was founded in 1988 in Hayward, Wis. with a goal of providing disabled anglers with quality fishing opportunities. FHNB now has 23 chapters in 23 states, including the Wheatland chapter of Fishing Has No Boundaries in Butler County which began in 2000.

importantly, they witness the positive self-image, independence and genuine feeling of accomplishment as it surfaces in each participant. The experience is always as uplifting for the volunteers as it is for the participants.

Of course, since WFHNB is a nonprofit organization, the annual event can only be accomplished through the efforts of volunteers, financial donations and donations of equipment and supplies. This help comes from an enormous list of supporters, including, but not limited to, businesses, individuals, labor organizations, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP), and even anonymous donors.

WFHNB has a core group of elected board members who work diligently for 12 months of the year to ensure the September event is successful. They are located in the offices of Resource For Independent Living in El Dorado. The board meets monthly throughout the year and weekly the last month prior to the event. Each meeting is used to develop and implement a strategy that will cover all bases and explore new options and ideas to improve the event. Brochures are designed, printed and distributed throughout the community in late spring or early summer. Board members recruit volunteers who visit with as



All types of fishing are allowed and all species are targeted. The WFHNB event has been scheduled for the first full weekend in September each year to avoid inclement weather.

many potential donors as possible, seeking commitments of assistance for the upcoming event. Donors come in all forms, and the donations range from a few chocolate brownies to thousands of dollars. They come from major industry, trade unions, and individual Kansans wanting to do whatever they can to help make that weekend

in September special for so many. All donations are carefully documented, and the donors are all recognized on a large board prominently displayed at the event site. The last full weekend of September was designated because at that time of the year the hot weather has normally tapered off and the cold weather has yet to arrive. Over the course of 10 years, this has proven to be a good choice. Mostly, we have been blessed with good weather.

While it's obvious that a nonprofit organization would need donations to conduct this event, the type of donations needed for logistical support may not be. For example, one company furnishes a large cooker to help feed a small army of participants and volunteers. A rental company from Augusta furnishes portable toilets and hand cleaning stations for both volunteers and participants. Another rental company in Wichita provides a giant industrial generator to supply power for the



Volunteers provide all the boats for anglers and their helpers. Each boat is inspected for safety equipment and given emergency flags and cards prior to launching. Many boats and operators come from the ranks of local bass and walleye fishing clubs

weekend. One person supplies a large circus-style tent, big enough to hold 200 people. Of course, KDWPT plays a major role, providing a special dock for the boats to pick up participants, extra trash barrels, picnic tables, and the labor to erect the large tent. There are too many important contributions to list here, but all play a vital role in making that weekend so special.

Obviously, an important requirement for a successful fishing experience is the availability of boats, and all boats are furnished by volunteers. Boats of all sizes and descriptions are welcome and appreciated. Each boat is inspected for safety equipment and given emergency flags and cards prior to launching. Many small fishing boats and bass boats are used. In fact, many boats and operators have come from the ranks of local bass and walleye fishing clubs. They may only hold

one or two participants, but all are put into service. Pontoon boats are the most in demand due to their safety and compatibility with wheelchairs. Each boat usually has an operator and a helper. These are mostly people who are experienced fishermen. For some participants and especially those who are wheelchair bound, a trained caregiver must accompany them on the boat. It doesn't take long, therefore, to fill up even a pontoon boat. Bait, poles and tackle, and life jackets are provided by WFHNB. For many of the wheelchair-bound participants, an adaptive electronic reel is provided that allows even the most severely handicapped to land a fish.

All legal fish species are targeted. Anglers in last year's event caught more than 190 fish, the majority of which were channel catfish. There were also white bass, wipers, large-mouth bass, carp, green sunfish,

walleye, blue cats and flatheads taken. El Dorado has a 35-inch length limit on blue catfish, and 21-inch length limit on wipers and black bass, so all of those were released. For participants who wished to keep their catch, volunteers were available to clean and bag it for them. Boats were boarded before 8 a.m. Saturday morning and returned at noon for lunch. At 1 p.m. they went back out and fished until 5 p.m. On Sunday the fishing lasted until noon when everybody returned for a barbecue and contest awards.

In addition to the fishing, there are three meals served each day. On Saturday evening, participants and volunteers enjoy a fried catfish meal with fish caught during the summer by one of the volunteers. Last year's event included a fireworks display and dance for participants and volunteers. Each volunteer and partici-



In addition to serving three meals each day on Saturday and Sunday, the WFHNB event conducts an award banquet on Sunday. Plaques and medals are presented for largest and smallest fish in a variety of categories.



The smile on the face of the angler is all the reward volunteers need. An event of this magnitude requires months of planning, donations and hundreds of volunteers, but a picture of pure joy like that above will motivate all to make next year's event even better.

pant received t-shirts with the WFHNB logo to wear. Also hats, sweatshirts, and other items were available for sale to help raise money for next year's event.

On Sunday afternoon, after the barbecue meal, prizes and awards were given for various categories, including the largest and smallest fish, as well as youngest and oldest participants. After the presentations, participants and volunteers left with fond memories of the event fresh on their minds.

It takes volunteers and board members a couple of days to get everything cleaned up, taken down, and returned to the generous donors. An end-of-event meeting is held with the board during which a list of observations and suggestions for improvement are documented

while still fresh on everyone's mind. Through our first decade of Wheatland Fishing Has No Boundaries, we have watched the number of participants grow each year. Even with economic challenges and the ever-increasing logistical requirements to make each year a success, the generosity of the community and the volunteers keep us striving for improvement. Last year's events brought volunteers from as far away as Satanta in southwest Kansas and Kansas City in the northeastern part of the state. El Dorado Lake's central location and easy access to the Kansas Turnpike and US Highway 77/54 makes it a great location. It is WFHNB's desire to make all the people of Kansas aware of this worthwhile event. Our fantastic

fishing resource is something we should all be thankful for and proud of. It is also something that should be enjoyed by all Kansans.

Board members are already hard at work preparing for next year's event. For those interested in helping out with a boat or just assisting in the hundreds of tasks necessary to keep the event moving smoothly, you can contact the good people at Resource For Independent Living in El Dorado, (800) 960-7853, or for more information contact me at cdmabry1@cox.net.

When you see the ear-to-ear smile on the face of a participant as they land a fish and listen to the happy cheers as they enjoy the great outdoors experience, I promise you won't be disappointed.





Hook More Walleye

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

*A specially designed hook
combined with the
bottom-bouncer technique
for walleye has put more
walleye in the author's boat.*

Every year, outdoor gear advertisements tout some innovative piece of equipment, but it usually turns out to be a repackaged tried-and-true product that's been around for years. However, on occasion something truly new comes out. Fishing electronics are improving, trail cameras have evolved as have archery equipment and fishing tackle. And even the most rudimentary piece of fishing equipment, the hook, has taken a turn

for the better according to those who like to fish for walleye.

"I've been using the Slow Death hook for several years now," said avid walleye angler Kendall Strutt, 42. "I use it a lot and it seems to work on most any lake we fish."

While anglers have just recently discovered the Slow Death hook, the concept isn't that new. The man first credited with the idea is South Dakota tournament angler and guide Dave Spaid. Spaid got the idea from watching smelt that had

come through the turbines at Lake Oahe's dam. He started bending an Aberdeen-style hook to hold part of a night crawler to imitate that slow death spin he saw in the smelt as they floated downstream.

In more recent times, decorated walleye tournament anglers Gary Parsons, his son, Chase, and Keith Kavajecz worked on their own bends of a No. 2 Mustad Aberdeen hook. Through trial and error, they came up with the right bends in the hook to get the night crawler to

consistently spin in a “slow death” fashion. They took the idea to Mustad which jumped at the idea, and they now produce a Slow Death hook in three different sizes (#1, #2 and #4) and three colors (red, bronze and gold).

“I first learned about it from Gary Parsons when he was fishing the Professional Walleye Tournament (PWT) Championship at Milford Reservoir about six or seven years ago,” Strutt said. “He was in the process of testing it and he gave me a couple to try. I’ve been using them ever since.”

Parsons admits there will never

be a secret bait or tactic that will catch walleye in every situation all the time. However, he says the Slow Death rig continues to prove to be a versatile addition to his arsenal, and he doesn’t hit the water without it.

It’s worked very well for Strutt in his experiences fishing Kansas walleye tournaments with his 17-year-old son, Kyle.

“We’ve had a lot of success with it fishing tournaments,” said Strutt.

The father-son Strutt team won back-to-back top team honors in the 2010 and 2011 Kansas Walleye Association Tournament Circuit.

“The technique is nothing real fancy but it has paid off,” Strutt said. “It might be that it’s a smaller bait or just presented in a different way but we’ll stick with it.

“I’m just having fun watching my son enjoy fishing these tournaments,” he added. “He’s constantly trying to change things up to catch fish, and he has enough energy and enthusiasm to keep both of us going.”

Slow Death hooks are fished on bottom bouncers in place of traditional spinners. Parsons recommends a bouncer weight of 1 ½ ounces in water 12-20 feet deep



Belleville resident Kendall Strutt has found success catching walleye using the Slow Death hook presentation that has become popular. Strutt and his 17-year-old son, Kyle, won overall top team honors in the 2010 and 2011 Kansas Walleye Association Tournament Circuit.

and a 2-ounce bouncer in water from 20-30 feet deep. Anglers fishing bouncers in water shallower than 12 feet often choose $\frac{3}{4}$ -ounce or 1-ounce bouncers.

Strutt likes the versatility of a 2-ounce bouncer for many Kansas applications.

"I can fish water 35-40 feet at Wilson Reservoir, and then it still works well for fishing 15-feet of water, too," he said.

A good rule of thumb for the amount of line to let out is to double the depth of the water. That is, if the water is 15 feet deep, let out approximately 30 feet of line. Ideally, the bouncer is ticking the bottom at about a 45-degree angle.

The Slow Death hook is attached to a 3-4 foot section of monofilament, which should be lighter pound-test than the main line. This allows just the hook to break off instead of losing the bottom bouncer, too. To properly rig the hook, thread the night crawler onto the hook and push it up just past the eye of the hook and actually just



Strutt with a nice Lovewell Reservoir walleye taken on the Slow Death hook. The author uses the hook in conjunction with a bottom bouncer, leader and night crawler.

onto the line above the knot. Pinch the worm off leaving no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch of night crawler trailing behind the hook. On large night crawlers, you can halve the worm and use both pieces equally well.

Optimum speed for most spinner rigs is around 1 mph. However, the Slow Death hook concept works best when trolled or drifted at $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ mph or a bit faster when the fish are aggressive. It's



Electronics are a critical part of every walleye angler's arsenal, but several functions of modern sonar units can make a difference. The sonar function helps find structure, fish and the preferred depth. The trackback function of the GPS unit allows the angler to pinpoint fish-holding structure drift after drift.

important to monitor the performance of the night crawler and make sure it spins correctly. Big, plump, healthy night crawlers work best for this application. If the night crawler doesn't spin correctly, either reposition it on the hook or use a fresh night crawler.

Many fish often hook themselves on this rig when they're hitting aggressively. Short hits aren't common since the set-up is a relatively small target. Hook sets are similar to those used with a spinner rig, and a deliberate,

sweeping motion is all that's needed.

Walleye are indeed the target of a Slow Death presentation, but other fish don't have any problems attacking it, either. Such was the case last summer when I took my three kids fishing. In just three hours, with each of them fishing one rod and two of them using the Slow Death presentation, they caught 108 fish. While they had several keeper-sized walleye and a bunch of shorts, there were many wipers and white bass that consis-

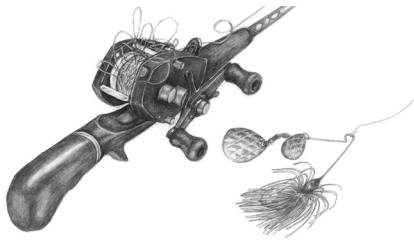
tently nailed the Slow Death offering, too. We released all fish. The kids had a blast, and I had even more fun watching them enjoy their success.

The Slow Death hook presentation is worth a try. It's nothing fancy, actually quite subtle, but it's been proven to work for the casual or tournament angler.

"You just can't go wrong with them," Strutt concluded. "They're simple to use, they're inexpensive and they produce." 🎣



Walleye aren't the only fish to love the Slow Death hook presentation. The author's kids, (L-R) Cody, Brandon and Ashley, show off just a handful of more than 100 fish they caught in three hours on a trip last summer. Many were wipers and white bass with a bunch of short and a few keeper-sized walleye mixed in.



Backlash

by Mike Miller

DOWN BY THE CREEK

My buddy and I tied some fishing line on a couple of 3-foot wood slats. We scrounged a couple of hooks from his dad's tackle box, and we had three hotdogs and a piece of raw bacon in a sandwich baggy for bait. Even though we both owned fishing poles, this seemed like more fun and more appropriate for our impending adventure. We were a couple of third-graders embarking on a journey to explore a wilderness river. We weren't even sure it held fish, but we were going to find out.

The first leg of the journey was crossing the busy highway that separated the subdivision where my buddy lived and the golf course where the "wilderness river" ran. It was a country club, and we weren't members, but that only increased the excitement and danger level. I guess we were somewhat of a novelty because I remember one of the groundskeepers stopping to see what we were doing. I thought he might run us off, but when he saw the slats and hotdogs, he just chuckled, "Catchin' any?"

Just then, I raised my line up to see a giant crawdad hanging on to the chunk of hotdog on my hook. It let go and dropped back into the water, but my eyes were as big as saucers. He chuckled again and drove on, leaving us to our adventure.

Jeff and I spent hours exploring and fishing along the tiny creek, and we caught crawdads and fish we called creek chubs. I don't know if that's what they really were, but they were scrappy, silvery fish as beautiful to me then as any rainbow trout is today. A big creek chub was 8 inches, and once in a while, we'd catch a small sunfish, which was cause for excitement. Living in the "burbs," this was as close to wild as we would get on our own, and it was great fun. Forty-five years later, I vividly remember some of those enchanting experiences.

I can see now that spending time fishing and exploring along these creeks when I was a boy was an integral part of my childhood, and wherever we lived, I sought them out. When my family moved to a different suburb a year later, I had to find another "wild"

area. Our home was in a newly developed division, and there were open fields and a drainage area not far down the road. The little creek was intermittent, so there weren't any fish, but there was a pool of water below the culvert and in the cattails that lined it, where frogs, spiders and other critters waited to be discovered. The neighbor kids and I spent hours exploring that "creek."

The next move took us to a small town in southcentral Kansas, where I momentarily forgot about creeks. I could ride my bike to the county state fishing lake, and that consumed all of my attention my first summer there. It was manmade, surrounded by a road and rip-rapped shoreline, so it wasn't wild, but my friends and I had a ball fishing, catching frogs and tadpoles and getting really wet and muddy.

For our wild adventures, we traveled 10 miles south of town to a private farm pond. While we fished and swam in the pristine pond, the creek below the pond drew us, especially in the heat of the summer. It was always cooler in the shade of the trees along the creek, and I can remember lots of fun adventures, catching bullheads and green sunfish, learning to set banklines, and imagining what else the slow-moving waters held.

I would venture a bet that anyone who had similar opportunities remembers them fondly. For youngsters, there's something magical about a creek, and there is an endless array of outdoor and wildlife lessons to be learned. Even now, moving water draws and mesmerizes me. When I fish creeks or streams, I lose track of time. Walking along, wading, fishing each hole and exploring the banks, I always end up twice as far away from where I parked than I think I should be.

There are some beautiful creeks and streams on public lands surrounding our reservoirs, and some of our state fishing lakes have streams above or below them. If you're willing to walk a short distance, you can usually get away from other anglers, and soon, you'll be lost in your own "wilderness river." 