

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

MAY/JUNE 2013

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KANSAS *View*

by Robin Jennison



Go Fish

In Kansas, May is for anglers what November is for hunters. There are too many great outdoor opportunities and not enough days in the month to enjoy them all. Now is the time to catch crappie, walleye, bass, catfish, bluegill – you name the sport fish, this month is the best time to catch it.


This spring took its sweet time getting here. As early as spring arrived last year, it was just as late this year, and we were still seeing snowflakes in mid-April. However, we couldn't complain about any moisture, liquid or frozen after the drought we've endured. We are at a stage in this drought where precipitation is the limiting factor for both our bird hunting and our fishing prospects. We needed rain for a good pheasant and quail nesting season. I'm optimistic the snow and rains we had in February and March will help our birds. However, we need more to get our reservoirs back to conservation pool. By the time you read this, I'm hoping that's the case because it only takes a one or two rain events in the right place to fill our lakes.

When the water does come, we'll be ready. Fisheries section staff worked hard this past fall and spring to ensure fish for the future. Last fall, biologists sampled sport fish populations in Kansas lakes, and the data gained allowed them to produce a forecast for anglers and a stocking plan for the future. In March, fisheries biologists captured wild walleye and sauger for our artificial spawning programs. Just more than 5 million sauger were produced to supplement populations at several northeast Kansas reservoirs. These populations provide a source of sauger needed to create 14 million saugeye, a hybrid produced by fertilizing walleye eggs with sauger milt. Saugeye are stocked in many smaller lakes and turbid, high-flow-through reservoirs where walleye populations can't be maintained. More than 73 million walleye eggs were taken at a couple of reservoirs. Some of these became saugeye, and the rest were hatched to be stocked either as fry or fingerlings in Kansas reservoirs.

At the KDWPT hatchery in Meade, biologists have been busy with an early-spawn bass program. They produced more than 3 million bass fry, but the kicker is that these fish were spawned a month-and-a-half before largemouth bass naturally spawn. Biologists trick the brood fish into spawning by manipulating photo-period and water temperature in a controlled hatchery system.

The program's goal is to improve bass fishing in Kansas' older reservoirs. All of our reservoirs produced great bass fishing when they were new, and some have produced outstanding bass fishing when they refilled after a long drought. However, when water levels are stable, bass populations decline. One reason may be that the main forage fish in an aging reservoir is gizzard shad. Gizzard shad spawn before largemouth bass under natural conditions, so the young-of-the-year shad quickly grow too large to feed young-of-the-year bass. Under normal conditions in most aging Kansas reservoirs, young of the year bass rarely survive their first winter.

This is the fourth year for the early bass spawn program and results are promising. If it works as hoped, bass anglers will find more bass in their favorite reservoirs.

And that's just part of the story. KDWPT biologists will work through the summer to produce channel and blue catfish, wipers, bluegill and more. Our fish biologists and fish culture staff are dedicated to improving fishing opportunities for Kansas anglers. And state park and public lands staff have been busy this spring making sure the parks and state fishing lakes are ready for you to enjoy. Take advantage of these great resources this spring and summer with your family. There are many great family-friendly parks, state fishing lakes and community lakes across Kansas just waiting to be discovered. To find one, go online at ksoutdoors.com, and click on "Where To Fish" or "State Park Locations." 

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

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Front Cover: Barbara Pfaff used an ultralight spinning outfit and jig to catch this farm pond crappie. The spinning outfit was the right tool for the job. Photo by Mike Miller. **Back Cover:** Gene Brehm photographed Jensen Hoeme with his first spring gobbler taken during the 2013 youth season in Pratt County.



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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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Letters . . .

FOR THE BIRDS

Editor:

Every night at 9:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., the movie theater cleans out the popcorn popper. They usually bag up three or four cubic feet of movie popcorn in a plastic trash bag. They throw it away.

Now, snow covers the ground and wildlife has a hard time. Will movie theater popcorn help or hurt turkeys in my area?

But the theater manager will give me the popcorn. Should I try to feed these birds.

*Ken Michaels
Shawnee*

Mr. Michaels,

I consulted with several bird experts and did a little research on the internet and couldn't find a source that thought the popcorn would hurt the birds. In fact, many people feed popcorn and report that birds will readily eat it. There were a few comments that salt and butter on a regular basis might not be healthy for birds, but on occasion, it probably won't hurt.

Miller

FOR SENIOR LICENSE

Editor:

It has been some time now since I last sent a "letter to the editor," so I am (sending one) now. I just wanted to comment on now charging everyone for their fishing license. IT'S ABOUT TIME! I have always advocated everyone purchase a fishing license no matter - at a young age up to retirement age.

Now, if anyone should have a break with a license (fee), it should be of the younger set, as we older geezers should be a lot more able to pay than the younger set. Although, I would guess, if you can't afford a license, you can't afford to go fishing anyway. Who knows?

My last comment refers to adding to the department the Kansas Park Authority and the Department of Tourism. I just feel these two departments need to be on their own. Seems like a lot of financing from us sportsmen and ladies is spent on them, which causes less to be used for outdoor sports (fishing and hunting). Of course, this is just my feeling and observation.

This magazine is one of the best in the country. Even my son-in-law, who is a surgeon in Georgia, likes reading it.

Keep up the good articles and photos.

*Jack Copeland
Salina*

Mr. Copeland,

I agree with you about license fees. In Kansas, hunting and fishing is a user-pay system - only those who choose to hunt and fish pay. And license fees are spent on current year programs and expenses. I think you're spot on with your observation that younger folks probably need a price break more than older folks. A young couple with a car and house payment and two children may have less expendable income than someone of retirement age.

As far as the parks and tourism divisions taking funding from our wildlife programs, there are strict regulations and a complicated cost-accounting system we follow to ensure that Wildlife Fee Fund (WFF) money (sale of licenses and permits) is only spent on wildlife and fisheries programs. Spending WFF on anything else would jeopardize the federal funding we receive from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program, which comes from excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment and is returned to states based, in part, on the number of hunting and fishing licenses sold. That's another reason we asked for a change in the age exemption; we will receive more federal funding as a result. No Wildlife Fee Fund is spent on State Parks or Tourism division programs. In addition to fee funds, those two divisions are funded with Economic Development Initiative Funds (Lottery).

Miller

RENEWAL QUESTION AND MORE

Editor,

It would be nice if we could be notified a month or two before the subscription expired. Since I've been paying for five magazines besides my own, I have not kept expiration dates. I usually subscribe for three years and my memory is not that good. I believe each household

is still getting the magazine, except I've changed a name or two as the older boys have moved out.

I'm disappointed to see that the magazine is now apparently being printed in California. Too bad it can't be done in Kansas.

*Ted Crawford
Hays*

Mr. Crawford,

I apologize for any inconvenience our renewal lapse may have caused. My answer to that issue actually leads to my answer to the second issue. We switched fulfillment providers last fall. A fulfillment service manages our subscriber list and sends out up to three renewals as a subscription nears expiration. You should have received a renewal several issues before your subscription expired, then another before your last issue and one right after expiration. However, converting our subscriber data and renewal scheduling to a new fulfillment provider was a lengthy and somewhat complicated process, and we fell behind. We should be back on schedule now.

As for your second issue: The fulfillment provider is located in Anaheim, Calif. We requested bid proposals (as is required by state law) and did not receive any from Kansas-based companies. The current contract is saving a significant amount of money, but it does require sending renewals out of state. The magazine is written, photographed and assembled here in Kansas. A small information staff, with the help of KDWPT employees who contribute articles, produce the magazine in-house. However, we are also bound by state law to solicit bids for printing the magazine. Kansas-based printers have won that bid in the past, but our current contract is with a printer located in Liberty MO.

I hope this addresses your issues. If you have further questions about your subscriptions, you can call our fulfillment service toll-free, 1-800-999-9718, or you may call the Pratt KDWPT office, (620) 672-5911.

Miller

BIRD BRAIN

with Mike Rader

RAIN CROW?

When I was a kid, my dad and grandpa told me about a bird called a “rain crow.” It was an elusive and rarely-seen enigma that made a funny *ka, ka, ka, ka, ka* or *kow, kowp, kwop, kwop* sound. It was kind of like someone squeezing air out of a bag, in an odd, rhythmic way. They said that it usually called before it was going to rain and that it was a good thing to hear them.

Having heard the call several times without seeing the bird, I was totally surprised when I finally figured out it was a yellow-billed cuckoo. It looked nothing like what I expected. It should have been more like a crow – black, maybe a bit smaller than a regular crow to be able to escape detection – something very stealthy! But it didn’t look anything like a crow. I later found out the term “rain crow” was an old folk name, originating in the South, for this bird and its relative, the black-billed cuckoo – probably from the birds’ habit of calling on hot, humid days, often before a thunderstorm.

Even though they are not real prognosticators of the weather, I’ve learned to admire and appreciate them for what they are: really cool birds.

Yellow-billed cuckoos are medium-sized songbirds, similar in size to an American robin or common grackle. This species has a long tail, with a series of large white spots on the edges, a brownish back, with rufous primary wing feathers that show up well in flight. They have a white belly and breast and a bill that is blackish above with a yellow lower mandible. Cuckoos are slow-moving and secretive, sometimes sitting motionless for long periods of time when hunting insects, making it often difficult to see them in dense foliage. Black-billed cuckoos are similar in build and plumage, but can be told apart by the existence of a bold, red eye-ring, an all-black bill, smaller spots in the tail and absence of the rusty wing patches.

Yellow- and black-billed cuckoos, along with the greater roadrunner, are the only members of the New World cuckoo family that inhabit Kansas. They breed in the eastern half of the U.S, with some small, isolated populations in the west, and spend the winter in South America, ranging as far south as Argentina. These birds are late to arrive in the spring (usually in mid-May), but will linger into cooler weather in the fall as long as there are adequate caterpillars to feed on.

In Kansas they tend to be found in open, wooded areas associated with streams and to a lesser extent in towns where large trees and shrubs exist. They feed on insects, some berries, fruit and seeds, eggs of other birds, and lizards, but are especially fond of cicadas and hairy/fuzzy caterpillars. They have a strange adaptation where they remove some of the spines (fuzz) from the caterpillars while eating them, but what spines do make it into their gut collect in the stomach lining. In time, this lining then can be shed and re-grown during their life.

Nesting occurs in early summer when one to five eggs are

laid. They seem to do better and have more offspring in years when there is a large outbreak of tent caterpillars or a periodical cicada hatch. Abundant food will sometimes stimulate egg-laying by the female before their nest is constructed. This may

be the reason they will sometimes lay an egg in the nest of another species (American robin, gray catbird, northern cardinal, mourning dove, wood thrush or even black-billed cuckoo being the most common species), but usually they tend their own nest and eggs. Both of the parents are involved in incubating, with equal time spent during the day and the male taking over exclusively at night. During the day, the male will often bring back nesting material to add to the nest lining when the exchange of incubating duties takes place. Another interesting thing is that they have also been observed going back to the nests of another species they laid an egg in and feeding their young and the young of the host species, as well. Another amazing fact about their nesting is that the whole process from egg-laying and incubation to the time the young fledge from the

nest only takes 17 days! Literature says that on day six or seven after hatching, the feathers burst out from the sheaths and they can become fully-feathered in a matter of a couple of hours. Young often leave the nest before they can fly, but are still being cared for by the parents. They clamor around in the trees for days until they learn to fly.

As adults, cuckoos spend time foraging in the trees for caterpillars and will sometimes set up shop near tent caterpillars and fall webworm infestations, taking advantage of prey not often utilized by other bird species. Life can be a hazard for these birds. They have a habit of flying just a few feet off of the ground when going from place to place and are often the victims of car collisions when flying across roadways. They migrate at night and are also often found as tower kill casualties from colliding with guy wires and/or the metal structures of cellular communications and radio towers.

I always look forward to first hearing, then finally seeing my first yellow-billed cuckoo of the spring. It takes me back to much simpler times when I would hear a strange call from some unseen bird in the trees, think about my dad or grandpa and wonder when it would begin to storm.



Bob Gress photo

IT'S THE LAW

with Kevin Jones



SAFE BOATING

The heart of the boating season is upon us. While Kansas enjoys an almost year-round boating opportunity, the heart of the boating season typically runs from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Boaters are anxious to get on the water at the beginning of the season, and the holiday weekend provides that opportunity. The Fourth of July holiday is a mid-season high-point for boaters, and they close out the year with another long holiday weekend on Labor Day. But regardless of whether it is the first day on the water or the end of a great boating season, one important thing boaters need to keep in mind is that necessary safety equipment is a key part of enjoying the time on the water.

Boating is a very safe activity, but as with all things in life, sometimes the unexpected happens and an accident occurs. Having the proper safety equipment readily available on board may ensure a minor mishap doesn't turn into a tragedy. Unfortunately, safety rules and equipment are too often thought of as a hindrance to having fun when it fact they are the passport to having a better experience on the water.

The most commonly violated safety laws are the ones concerning the possession, use and accessibility to personal floatation devices, better known as life jackets. Too often, our officers hear a variety of excuses that don't really carry weight. For instance, I have heard parents and grandparents say that a small child or baby really doesn't need to be wearing a life jacket. They will just hold the child on their lap or just watch them so they don't accidentally fall overboard. To some this may sound fine, but reality is at times more sobering. Sometimes you lose your grasp, or a child does something unexpected when the adult's attention is turned away for a moment, and suddenly the

unexpected happens. That is why, in Kansas, every child who is 12 years of age or younger is required to wear a properly fitting U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket while aboard or being towed by any vessel.

We also see adults who think they are good, or at least adequate, swimmers and therefore think they don't really need a life jacket. Unfortunately, every year our officers deal with situations where someone really didn't understand the difficulties of keeping afloat after falling in a windblown reservoir or catching up to a boat that is drifting away at a rapid rate. It is times like these that a life jacket can be the difference between life and death. Our laws require that every boat shall have a properly fitting life jacket of the proper type on board and readily accessible for every passenger on board or being towed by the vessel. Readily accessible means the life jacket may not be stowed in a compartment or kept in a bag or packaging material, but shall be in open view and available for immediate use. While people over the age of 12 do not have to wear a life jacket while

on board, we certainly encourage people to wear them. Violations concerning life jackets are the most numerous violations concerning watercraft operation that occur. That is why there is a no tolerance policy in enforcing these laws.

There are other very important safety rules to follow as well. Refraining from drinking alcohol while operating a watercraft is certainly one such rule. The majority of boating-related accidents involve alcohol. Other legal requirements include having a fire extinguisher, sound device, and navigational and anchor lights in proper working order. Remember, it is worth the time and effort to be sure all the necessary equipment is on board before you set sail. And it is just as important to continually check your equipment throughout the season to ensure it is available and in working order just in case the unexpected arises. It's a good idea to get a current copy of the boating regulation summary and read through it, so you know what is required when operating a boat. Copies are available at license vendors and online. If you have questions, let us know and we will get you the information you need. A little preparation and practicing safe boating will go a long way in ensuring you have a memorable boating season.



"Wild About Kansas" Junior Photo Contest

If you're an avid *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine reader, then you know our January/February issue is jam-packed each year with amazing images from some of the area's top outdoor photographers. One day we got to thinking, why stop there?

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism is proud to announce the 1st annual Wild About Kansas junior photo contest going on now. "Wild About Kansas" is a program designed to showcase Kansas outdoors through the lens of young photographers. Winning entries will be featured in the 2014 January/February issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine.

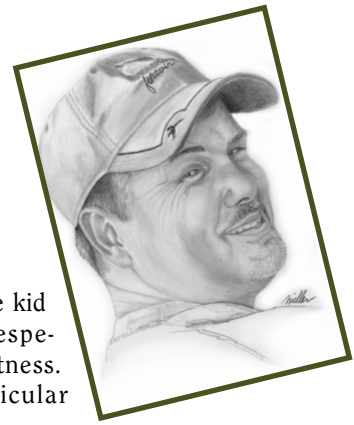
Participants must be age 18 or younger. Photos must be the participant's original work and be taken within the state of Kansas. There is no fee to participate.

For more information, including entry rules, submission instructions, and judging criteria, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click "Services/Publications/Magazine/Wild About Kansas."



— Nadia Marji

WE ALL FALL DOWN



Two of my coworkers and I were walking back to the office after lunch. As always, they were very curious about what I was going to work on that afternoon.

"I'll bet he plays golf," Heather guessed.

"I don't know, it's pretty nice out. I think he just might go fishing," replied Sheri.

"Hey, I have a lot of work to do. And rolling your eyes is an example of bad eye care."

"Okay Mr. NonWorkman," giggled Sheri. "What are you working on this afternoon?"

"If you must know, I am writing an article on falling down. Not the kind of fall where you are hurt; the kind that humiliates you and makes you the butt of jokes and ridicule for days to come."

"Well," retorted Sheri, "I never fall downwwwn!"

Sheri had just been the victim of karma. She bragged that it would never happen and it happened within the next few seconds. She must have had a lot of bad karma built up for it to react that fast.

After I ascertained that she was not hurt, I helped her to her feet and gave her words of encouragement through gasps of laughter.

"Holy cow Sheri, you just performed a perfect triple Salchow into a gorgeous pirouette. Until you fell in a heap, I thought it was the best floor exercise I have ever witnessed. If I had it on video, I could have sent it to the US Olympic Committee. They might want to talk to you."

Heather jumped in, "Sheri, I can't believe how far you flung your cell phone. You must have hurled that thing fifty yards." I thought it was rude of Heather to pile on like that.

"You know I hate you," Sheri said. "This better never make it into your article."

"I promise."

Falling down is a part of life. And for me, falling down while in the woods is common. However, as I have aged and become more brittle, my falls have actually become less catastrophic. See, I used to try and catch myself, but now I just give in, relax and roll. My so-called friends call this the fainting goat fall. My legs remain rigid, locked in place by a combination of arthritis and titanium joints as I roll on my back, my legs straight up in the air.

When I was a boy, a kid down the street named Greg accompanied my brother and me once when we ran our trap line. The wind chill was below zero and there was a coating of ice on everything, and I was running my line to pick up sets. Greg showed up in a Peter's jacket and a pair of dingo boots. He fell down 19 times in one hour, each fall funnier than the last. My brother and I watched in amazement each time Greg slipped. His arms would rotate like windmills and his dingo boots were a blur. For 20 seconds, he would try to catch himself before falling on his back. We dubbed this the River Dance fall. Little did we know that Greg was on the cutting edge of a future dance craze.

The one thing a guy doesn't want to do when in the midst of a

fall is shriek like a little kid on the playground, especially if there is a witness. One instance in particular comes to mind.

Dad and I were stalking some loud-mouthed gobblers that were hung up on the other side of a small creek. To get to them, we had to use our woodsman skills to creep silently down into the creek bank and up onto their side.

"Got to be real quiet," I warned.

Dad nodded as I slipped across the creek like a G.I. Joe. I looked back at Dad as he started down. Any tree with an exposed root that creates a perfect loop is a tree with a warped sense of humor, and this stretch of woods was like the comedy club for trees. Dad's foot slipped right into the loop root of the Red Skelton of oak trees. It happened so fast that all Dad could do was scream to mark his ultimate exit from the world. He took three fast steps toward the creek and almost as if a large invisible giant grasped his ankles, he flopped face-first into the water. I almost thought I saw a limb from that old tree push him forward. He shrieked and shoved his gun in the mud as he did the face-first Nester plunge into the cold water. Spluttering and shouting, he clamored up next to me with his mud caked gun.

"Thanks for the help son," he glowered.

"I'm in some pain Dad," I said as I rolled on the ground. "I think I laughed so hard it caused some internal injuries."

"Do you think those turkeys heard us?" he whispered.

My wife and I were throwing the Frisbee in the front yard the other night. My throw was a little low, but catchable. She stumbled as she moved forward to catch it. She should have performed the fainting goat maneuver and just went down. Instead she tried to catch herself. Her nose was six inches from the grass as her legs tried to catch up with her upper body. She was picking up speed and covering more ground than my English pointer (and looking pretty birdy). I was shouting instructions to her, "Fainting goat! Fainting goat!"

"Shut up! Shut up!" she yelled as she stumbled across the paved driveway, her nose and inch above the pavement. Just as she cleared the driveway, she face planted in the soft mud, her Southern Hemisphere rising above her Northern Hemisphere before falling in a pile.

"I sure wish I wouldn't have done that in front of you," she murmured as she lay there. After making sure she wasn't hurt, I grabbed a tape measure from the garage. I handed her one end and started to stretch out the tape.

"What are you doing?" she inquired.

"That has to be the longest fall on record. I am going to send this into the 'Guinness Book of World Records' to see if you have the longest horizontal fall. I might just make you famous dear."

"You know I hate you, right?"

Stay safe and upright.

Many people take their boats to the lake each year to spend time with family and friends, enjoy nature, and take in some good, clean, fresh air. Unfortunately, sometimes the air they breathe isn't so clean and breathing in that not-so-good air can result in injury or even death. Irritated eyes, headache, nausea, weakness and dizziness are often experienced by boaters and these symptoms are passed off as motion sickness or intoxication. However, sometimes it's something entirely different, and they are suffering from the beginning stages of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas, sometimes referred to as the "silent killer." It is produced when a carbon-based fuel such as gasoline, diesel, propane, charcoal, or oil burns. Potential sources on your boat may include engine exhaust, gas generators, cooking ranges, and charcoal grills. Cold or poorly tuned engines produce more carbon monoxide than warm, properly tuned engines. Even though you cannot see, smell, or taste CO, if you can smell exhaust fumes the poisonous fumes are in the air.

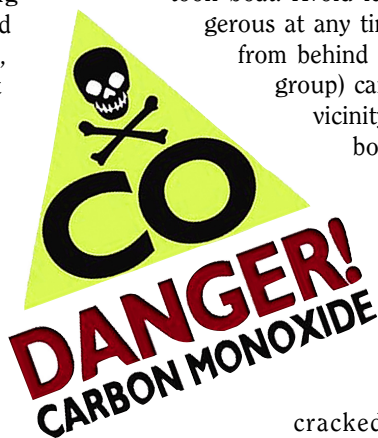
Carbon monoxide enters your blood stream through your lungs, and attaches itself to the red blood cells that are normally reserved for oxygen cells. Because CO bonds with blood cells 250 times faster than oxygen, all available red blood cells can soon be covered with CO molecules, depriving the body of much needed oxygen. CO causes you to lose consciousness by asphyxiation, not allowing any blood flow to the brain. CO is a cumulative poison, where smaller concentrations can build up over time and be just as lethal as short exposure to a larger concentration of the gas. Once CO is bound to the red blood cells, it can take 4-6 hours to get rid of half the poison.

CO fumes can build up in many places on a boat, but there are some areas that are more prone to the gas. When an engine or generator is running, the rear of the boat is an unsafe area. Swim platforms or rear decks can be the most dangerous places to be on a boat while the boat is running. Never swim near or around the platform on the back of a boat. CO fumes can become trapped under the deck and accumulate to a lethal level. Avoid the exhaust outlets on the side of the boat and never, ever swim into the air pocket between the pontoons on a houseboat or pontoon boat. Concentration levels in the pocket between pontoons have been mea-

Boat SAFE

with Erika Brooks

The Silent Killer



sured as high as 90,000 ppm if both the engine and a generator are running. A CO concentration level of 12,800 ppm will cause death within 1-3 minutes.

There are steps you can take to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning from causing injury or death to the people on your boat. Never swim directly behind a motorboat or under a pontoon boat. Avoid idling for long periods of time. This is dangerous at any time, but especially when the wind is coming from behind the boat. Rafting (tying boats together in a group) can cause problems for everyone in the direct vicinity, especially those in the water behind the boats. Be careful of backdrafting when traveling with a high bow angle (not on plane). Backdrafting causes carbon monoxide to be blown back into the boat, even if the boat is completely open with no closed compartments. Make sure your boat is well trimmed and the bow isn't too high in the air. Keep your engine tuned properly and check for exhaust leaks and cracked hoses, and install a carbon monoxide detector to warn of any buildup of CO fumes.

If someone starts to complain of feeling seasick, move them to fresh air immediately, investigate the cause and take corrective action. Seek medical attention if necessary. For more information on carbon monoxide poisoning and boating, visit www.ksoutdoors.com/news/boating.



HUNTING HERITAGE *with Kent Barrett*

SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY

It's nice to be home again! I just returned from a business trip to San Antonio, TX, and it's comforting to be back among the familiar. I always feel refreshed when I am back doing the same old familiar routines that I have come to experience every day. But this carries a risk that we frequently don't recognize and that can be dangerous.

While in San Antonio, I became acquainted with Tony Crow from Winnsboro Tex. Crow worked for 26 years at a power plant in north-east Texas. Part of his job every day was maintaining the safety standards for the workplace. He became familiar with safety protocols, and they became second nature to him. One of the workplace standards that could never be violated was the wearing of safety glasses. Crow and the other workers would never think of entering the workplace without first donning the required safety equipment. But Crow was not so diligent in his everyday pursuits outside the workplace.

Crow had been a dedicated west Texas quail hunter for more years than he had worked at the power plant. But his familiarity with hunting did not lead the same level of safety awareness as he had while working. One fateful day in February 2003, life for Crow changed forever in an instant. He and his son planned to enjoy one last quail hunt before the season ended. While driving to their hunting spot, Crow remembers passing a truck with a dog box in the bed and thinking that the men in the pickup were going to be enjoying the same adventure as he and his son. He noticed that the men were all wearing hunter orange shirts and hats and he remembers saying that they looked like novices since experienced hunters wore tan shirts and caps.

Later that same day while hunting an overgrown fencerow, Crow lost sight of his son and when a quail flushed, in a flash everything changed forever. Crow was hit full in the face with a charge of bird-

shot. He was blinded immediately and even though he hoped the situation would change and that he would be all right, reality was something far different. While Crow would have never thought of working without his safety equipment, he felt comfortable hunting without his safety equipment. He never thought twice about hunting without hunter orange to make himself more visible and safety glasses to protect his eyes from damage. Are we like Crow and neglect our safety equipment?

Crow's story reminded me of accounts from last December when Chicago Cubs manager Dale Sveum was shot by his friend Robin Yount while hunting in Arizona. He was drilled in the back by pellets when a bird flushed behind him and had one pellet stick in his ear. Later Sveum told reporters that this had happened so many times over the years that it had become an accepted part of the hunt. The only difference this time was there was actually blood drawn. When we get comfortable with certain practices, we really can put ourselves at risk for incidents that carry with them unintended but lasting consequences.

Crow spoke of his leader dog Rudy and explained that Rudy had been trained within a year to never ever take chances with his safety. He asked why we can't be trained to do the same. He asked why we wait for a rule to be made to force us to do the right thing instead of us making the choice to do it only because it is the right thing to do. Those are some good questions.

Please think about that this off-season. When the fall arrives with new hunting opportunities, will you make the choice to be safe? Do you have all your safety equipment and more importantly, do you use it properly? Hunting is safe and getting safer, but it is up to us to continue that trend. We can be passionate while we are being safe. That is our hunting tradition.

SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY

KDWPT'S JIM BUSSONE HE INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) game warden, Jim Bussone, has been selected as the 2012 Kansas Hunter Education Program Instructor of the Year. Bussone was nominated by fellow instructors who believe he demonstrates extraordinary, above standard actions that reflect favorably on hunters, the Hunter Education Program and KDWPT.

In his 30 years as a volunteer instructor, Bussone's "list of accomplishments is long," said KDWPT Law Enforcement Lieutenant Keith Rather in his nomination. Among those accomplishments, Rather included Bussone's participation in 30 hunter education/furharvester education classes

in 2012, initiation of a hunter education class for the Amish community at Fort Scott, assistance with Chanute hunter education classes during an instructor shortage, and his implementation of the ever-popular Women on Target event, which is now in its eighth year.

Rather also credited Bussone with being a driving force in establishing the Kansas Hunter Education in Our Schools program, namely in Fort Scott, Arma, Pittsburg, and Girard.

"Jim Bussone teaches more than hunter safety, he teaches life," said Girard High School health and physical education instructor Sunny Pierce. "He is a great educational resource for our school district and is deserving of our deepest

thanks and any recognition he is given."

In addition, Bussone is a hunter education area coordinator and serves on the Hunter Education Advisory Committee.

Bussone will receive a certificate of appreciation and a firearm as tokens of appreciation for his dedication.

In addition, the following instructors were recognized for their exemplary dedication to the program: Gerry Giroux, Salina; Albert Hermann, Garnett; Jay Farwell, Leavenworth; Rob Friggeri, Girard; Robert Paramore, McPherson; David Howe, McPherson; Larry Weast, Hiawatha; Hershel Martin, Kansas City; Larry McAdow, Halstead; and Don George, Mound City.

— KDWPT NEWS



A Sausage Education

Just the thought of making my own sausage reminds me of simpler times when there were fewer

processed foods loaded with preservatives and more food was homemade. To some, sausage making carries on a tradition of butchering and processing livestock on the farm. To others, it means getting together with family and friends to process wild game. Unfortunately, it's a tradition that's fading away. Anyone who has attempted to make homemade sausage will attest that it appears easier than it is. But, man it sure is worth the trouble.

The only equipment you'll need is a grinder or food processor. For a trial run, buy a small pork roast and grind it yourself. A simple breakfast sausage recipe consisting of three or four ingredients from the internet will work. The texture, quality and taste (if you picked a good recipe) will be far superior to what you find in the store. With some minor adjustments, you'll have a recipe to accommodate your tastes.

My wife ambitiously decided to make pork egg rolls one Sunday afternoon, but we were out of ground pork sausage. She only needed a pound, so I let her take a pound from a pork butt I was saving for snack sticks. She ground it with our small bench hand grinder, and it made the best egg rolls I have ever eaten.

Fresh sausage can be put in zip-lock bags and kept in the refrigerator or freezer. This is the easiest way to reduce labor and cost in equipment until one feels comfortable making cased sausage.

Casing sausage opens a whole new set of doors for making sausage. Sausage stuffers are used to case sausage and can vary from attachments of common kitchen appliances to stand alone devices. Now I make and use over 100 pounds of sausage a year and typically focus on deer meat. I stuff my sausage into a variety of casings and either boil, smoke, dry or bake the sausage to finish it.

Casings come in a variety of shapes, sizes and materials. Natural casings are made as a bi-product of the butchering process. The casings, or animal intestines, are thoroughly flushed and packed in salt to prevent spoilage and keep bacteria from breaking down the casing. Common natural casings come from sheep, pork and beef. Larger snack sticks and breakfast sausage-sized casings are from sheep. Bratwurst-sized casings come from pig, and larger bologna and salami sizes from cattle.

Synthetic casing comes in a wider variety of sizes and materials and are usually easier to work with and produce a more uniform sausage than natural ones do. Synthetics come in two forms edible and non-edible. The edible ones are made of collagen and are used in snack sticks, bratwursts, "Hot Mommas" and the like. Non-edible casings are made of various fibrous materials and are used in making bologna, summer sausage, salami and pepperoni. You can build your own casings using a material called muslin, similar to a cotton bed sheet. Muslin casings allow moisture and smoke transfer, necessary in some sausage-making processes.

Sausage making is a dying art, but those willing to spend some time at it, are well rewarded. Not only with knowledge and appreciation, but with some really great food.



I have no problem admitting that I'm a fishing tackle addict. Even though I probably catch 90 percent of my fish on 20 percent of my lures, I still have more lures and tackle than I can carry. I'm always looking for a new or different lure that will catch more fish. And when I see one I think fits that bill, I buy it (or three).

However, when my dad and I started fishing a local sandpit lake with a two-man bass scamp, I knew I couldn't take my full-size tackle box with me - at least not without capsizing the scamp. So, I bought a small tackle kit and filled the containers with my "essential" farm pond lures. If the truth be known, this selection would really be all I need on any water, but then what would be the fun of that?

Here they are, Miller's Farm Pond Essentials: For bass, I always reach for a safety-pin spinnerbait. I like one willow leaf

blade in gold and one Colorado blade in silver with a chartreuse and white or chartreuse and blue skirt. I like a white or chartreuse trailer. Put two or three of those in, quarter- and half-ounce. I also like to have at least one spinnerbait with a large single Colorado blade and a black or purple skirt for muddy or murky water. This would also be a good spinnerbait for fishing at night. It's also a good idea to have a couple of eighth-ounce spinnerbaits for early-spring or very clear water. Spinnerbaits can be fished in just about any water depth, and the safety-pin style is virtually snag proof in weeds and brush.

You need to have a couple quarter-ounce jig-and-pig or jig-and-plastic trailer combinations. I like a black or black and green colored skirt with a black trailer. Add a package of black or purple plastic worms with Texas-rig hooks and bullet weights. And throw in a couple of topwater plugs - a black Jitterbug or Zara Spook, a weedless frog and maybe a buzz bait.

I usually carry an ultra-light spinning outfit with me for crappie and panfish, so I always keep a supply of sixteenth- and eighth-ounce jig heads, some white and chartreuse twister-tail bodies and a handful of eighth-ounce marabou crappie jigs.

Add a couple of floats for fishing the jigs in brush, a pair of needle-nose pliers and your set. Now go catch fish.



Accidental HUNTRESS

with Nadia Marji

SNAG 'EM, BAG 'EM AND TAG 'EM

Before I was introduced to paddlefish snagging, the only type of snags I was familiar with were the kind that took place on my pantyhose.

It was spring break of my junior year in college and my friends and I were heading to the river. During our drive, my friends tried to explain the snagging process to me.

What do you mean you don't use bait? You just drag your hook across the water and catch a fish?" I said. Per usual, my naivety brought about hearty laughs throughout the vehicle, but I was so curious, I didn't mind.

At the time, I was living on a Top-Ramen-soup-every-night kind of budget, so I borrowed a pole from my boyfriend. As our group set up along the river, I must have looked like an adolescent boy at his first school dance, awkwardly trying to mimic everyone else's movements while trying not to bring too much attention to myself. After a few deep breaths, I whipped the pole back and cast my line. "Where did it go?" I said. By the look of bewilderment on my boyfriend's face, I knew it could have only gone one place – in a tree. Luckily, the angler next to me was in a charitable mood and helped free my hook from of the limbs. Now, I was more determined than ever.

What seemed like a million casts later, I had finally snagged one! My boyfriend quickly yelled "FISH ON!" Inexperienced, I let the fish take line, and I began running with it. As fellow anglers alongside the shore tried to hurriedly reel in their lines, I was busting through the crowd like a groupie at a rock concert who just got sight of the lead guitarist. I was not about to let that fish go, not after all of my hard work. Once hooked, this fish put up a good fight, but obviously it didn't know I was a Taurus and stubborn was my middle name, too. A few huffs and puffs later, I finally held my prized fish and just as it was hooked, so was I.

If there is one motto I live by in the outdoors, it's "never harvest anything you don't plan on eating." Since my freezer was now packed full with this fish, I knew I needed a recipe for cooking it that I wouldn't grow tired of after a few meals. Grilled fish is great, and baked with lemon is even better, but I wanted something with a little more pizzazz. Tapping back to my California roots, one thing came to mind: fish tacos.

Just as snagging became one of my yearly traditions, so did my feasts of paddlefish tacos. Time-consuming, but tasty, my recipe for paddlefish tacos is sure to make even the pickiest of eaters ask for seconds.

For a copy of my recipe, visit accidentalthuntress.blogspot.com.

Till next time – peace, love and paddlefish.

KANSAS BEST OF SHOW

Clarissa Miller, 17 years old from Hutchinson, submitted an entry featuring two American wigeons and claimed the state's top prize in the annual Kansas Junior Duck Stamp program on Wednesday, March 20, 2013. This is Miller's first "Best of Show" finish. Her entry is entitled, "Safe Among the Reeds."

Miller's entry competed alongside those from other 49 states and territories in the national competition on April 19 at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation and Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The first place national winner received a \$ 5,000 scholarship, a free trip to Washington D.C., and has their entry made into a Junior Duck Stamp, which is sold nationwide. Proceeds from the sale of the \$5 stamp fund conservation education and art scholarships.



Miller's art was chosen from 915 entries submitted from Kansas students in 22 public schools, three private schools, 17 home schools and/or home projects, three art studios, one 4-H Club and six private lessons. Entries were submitted in four age categories:

Group I:
K-3rd grade (264 entries)

Group II:
4th - 6th grade (250 entries)

Group III:
7th - 9th grade (327 entries)

Group IV:
10th - 12th grade (74 entries)



Hunting with a scoped rifle is a rewarding pursuit. Or, to clarify, hunting with a finely-tuned, sighted-in, scoped rifle is even better. All too often “close enough” is the phrase that ends some shooting practice or when a new scope first meets rifle on the range for the sighting-in session.

Whether you hunt big game like deer and elk or small game like squirrels and rabbits, there’s no better tool for the job than a tack-driving rifle. Accuracy is job one and critical to success, whether the kill zone is the size of a wash tub or a ping pong ball. Nearly all rifles can shoot well enough to dot an i, but it’s a matter of the hunter taking the time to dial it in.

A solid rest is critical for rifle accuracy when sighting-in a scope. But not too solid, as the rifle barrel can “jump” on a hard surface causing inconsistent results. Sandbags work well. Hunters should remember sight in with the same ammunition they hunt with.

It’s best to start out close, 25 yards is good, with a big paper target. For squirrels and rabbits, 25 yards is a common distance for dead-on accuracy with small calibers like .22s. For big game and large, centerfire rifles, the distance will be increased typically to 100 yards after initial adjustments.

If the scope is new to the rifle, you can

bore sight it to get it close (assuming it’s a bolt-action rifle without purchasing extra equipment). Simply place the rifle on the rest, remove the bolt, look down the barrel and center the target. The scope should then be adjusted to center on the target as well.

The quickest method to achieving accuracy is to shoot the rifle once with the crosshairs centered on the bull’s-eye. Looking through the scope with the crosshairs centered once again, and making sure the rifle does not move at all, move the scope adjustment knobs (windage and elevation) so the crosshairs move to the center of the fired bullet hole. Often referred to as the “Two-Shot” method of rifle sighting, another follow up shot should confirm initial accuracy.

The other option is to calculate how many inches off center the shot impacted the target. If the shot was 2 inches high and 1 inch left, the scope could be adjusted according to the minutes-of-angle, which typically equates to ¼-inch at 100 yards. At 25 yards the number of clicks would need to be multiplied by 4. In this example, it would take 32 clicks of elevation adjustment (down) and 16 clicks of windage (right).

Large-caliber rifles should be fine-

tuned at 100 yards. At longer distances it’s even more critical to have a steady rest and perfect trigger SQUEEZE. It’s not a bad idea to shoot a 3-shot group and take the average impact for any other adjustments. Typically, many calibers shoot well out to 200 yards without much need for additional bullet-drop compensation when sighted-in 3 inches high at 100 yards.

It’s a good idea to practice shooting any rifle used for hunting at various distances. Squirrel hunters who sight their .22s in at 25 yards need to remember to aim high at squirrels closer than that as the line of sight and bullet impact is much different at close ranges.

Big game hunters should practice at 200-300 yards so you know how the rifle and chosen load perform. Be careful to make mental notes about bullet trajectory and drop as the distance increases. However, you should only choose to shoot at any animal, even a record-book-sized one, if you’re confident you have the ability to make a quick and humane kill when you squeeze the trigger.



PARK VIEW with Kathy Pritchett GET OUTSIDE

Spring is here and the outdoors beckons us to GET OUTSIDE. U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin is issuing a "Call to Action on Walking" to get Americans walking to improve their mental and physical health as well as a way to conduct business. Science has proven that green spaces and walking through green leafy parks helps to relieve brain fatigue and improve focus and function. So, do yourself and your family a service and GET OUTSIDE.

Your state parks are waiting. Park staff worked all winter to improve your outdoor experience. We offer trails for your feet, your mountain bike, your horse (or mule or camel) or your canoe/kayak. Dogs are welcome on leash, although Tuttle Creek State Park offers an off-leash dog park. Some of our parks have NEOS, an interactive computerized game, which challenges your mental and physical abilities. You can camp with a tent, bring a luxurious RV, or skip the camping altogether and rent a modern cabin. Or just come out to enjoy the day. A few hours spent in the shade as the waves roll across the lake, listening to the wind and the lap of water on the shore can be as restorative as a spa day and much less expensive.

We have special events to challenge and entertain you, from triathlons and competitive trail rides to the Country Stampede. These also include fishing tournaments, outdoor cook-offs, family fun days, movie nights, historical reenactments and events in conjunction with community partners. June 1 and 1 are free fishing days, when no fishing license is needed. OK Kids Days, family cele-



brations with activities for kids of all ages, will occur at all state parks throughout the year. Check out our events calendar at ksoutdoors.com to find an event you want to attend. Also, watch for information about a major, next generation upgrade to our free Kansas State Parks Pocket Ranger® mobile application and an associated geochallenge.

Getting outdoors and to your state parks does more than improve your mental and physical health. The \$7.1 billion spent in Kansas on outdoor recreation (purchasing equipment, food, fuel, and other activities) supports 85,400 Kansas jobs. The recreation economy (not just Kansas state parks) generates \$2 billion in wages and pays \$477 million in state and local taxes.

This year, it's even easier to enjoy your state park because you can purchase a Kansas State Parks Passport when you renew your vehicle registration. The Passport is a \$10 savings over the cost of a state park annual motor vehicle permit, and is valid until the registration expires. Look for the enclosure with your vehicle registration notice.

Next time you waver between doing something indoors or getting outside to a park or recreation area near you, think again. You would be doing yourself and the state of Kansas a good deed to GET OUTSIDE.

Kansas Youth Right on Target

Kansas Archery in the Schools program hosted the fourth annual state archery tournament, Saturday, April 6, at Fort Hays State University.

The Kansas Archery program operates under the umbrella of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) and the National Archery in the Schools (NASP) program, a nonprofit foundation aimed at promoting international-style target archery among students in grades 4-12.

With the help of KDWPT and NASP, program coordinators are able to introduce archery as a fun, lifelong activity to young people who may have never taken up the sport otherwise. Currently, there are 223 Kansas schools involved with this program.

Out of the nearly 300 participants in attendance, a total of nine teams and nine individuals qualified to compete at the

national level.

Students from 13 communities competed this year, including: Anthony-Harper, Clearwater, Erie, Greely County (Tribune), Healy, Hugoton, Jackson Heights (Holton), Kingman, Neodesha, Otis-Bison, Prairie Trail Middle School (Olathe), Rose Hill, and Stockton.

Competing in one of three grade divisions, elementary school (4-6), middle school (7-8), or high school (9-12), participants are required to shoot five arrows in each of the three rounds from a distance of 10 meters and a distance of 15 meters.

A score of 300 points is considered perfect, which would be scores of 10 on each of the 30 arrows that can be scored.

Tatyana Miner of Clearwater shot a 279 to win Top Overall Shooter.

"This event was a huge success this year, largely due in part to our dedicated and hard working staff," said KDWPT



wildlife education coordinator Mike Rader. "This program wouldn't be possible without people like Joyce Ellis, the event coordinator at Fort Hays State University, Gary Keehn, the Kansas NASP state coordinator, all the NASP trainers, KDWPT employees, the Fort Hays State University students and the many other volunteers who set up and ran this competition. It was a great time."

Qualified participants will compete at the National Archery in the Schools tournament in Louisville Kentucky May 10-11.

— KDWPT NEWS

JAMESTOWN WILDLIFE AREA DEDICATION

In March, Ducks Unlimited and partners dedicated the Jamestown Wildlife Area Phase II project in Kansas, made possible through a North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant. Many partners, neighboring landowners, duck hunters and DU volunteers attended the event. DU will erect a cairn with a plaque honoring these partners and DU major sponsors who supported the project on the Buffalo Creek Marsh unit.

The second phase of the Jamestown project included acquisition of 997 acres at both Jamestown and Talmo Marsh Wildlife areas, and restoration of 393 acres of upland and wetland habitat. The Jamestown and Talmo Marsh Wildlife areas combined provide over 4,000 acres of shallow wetland habitat for migrating waterfowl.

"This is a large and diverse partnership that has come together for this project," Secretary Robin Jennison of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) said in his remarks during the dedication ceremony.

Indeed, local governments, tourism, economic development, utilities, government agencies and non-governmental wildlife organizations are among the partners. These include the City of Jamestown, Cloud County Tourism, Cloudcorp, the Boards of County Commissioners from Cloud, Jewell and Republic counties, Kansas Alliance of Wetlands and Streams, Westar Energy, Kansas Wildlife Federation, Pheasants Forever, U. S. Fish and



Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, DU and KDWP. The restored and protected wetlands provide important stopover habitat for waterfowl during spring and fall migration, particularly mallards, northern pintails, blue-winged teal, Canada geese and snow geese.

— Ducks Unlimited

Connect With Us Online



If you're looking for a way to connect with other outdoor enthusiasts, or just want a good read, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) has just the blog for you. Each blog features unique pictures and stories, as well as an opportunity for readers to join in the conversation!

Pass it On - Mike Miller, editor of Kansas Wildlife and Parks magazine, blogs about recruiting new hunters and anglers and the importance of passing on your passion for the outdoors to the next generation. To view

the Pass it On blog, visit: ks-pio.blogspot.com.

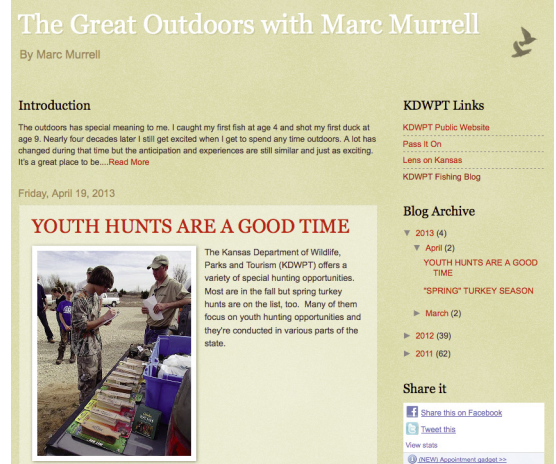
The Great Outdoors with Marc Murrell - Marc Murrell, staff writer and manager of the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, reflects on his experiences hunting, fishing, camping and teaching his children about appreciating the great outdoor opportunities we have in Kansas. To view The Great Outdoors blog, visit: outdoorswithmarcmurrell.blogspot.com.

Public Fishing Reports - "Dock Squawk" is the place to post your own fishing reports, ask questions or just talk fishing with other anglers and our fisheries staff. Or, with "Fishing Reports" you can read and comment on fisheries reports from our fisheries staff. To view the Public Fishing Reports blog, visit: ksfishing.blogspot.com.

TravelKS Blog - Covers everything from popular family attractions and historical hotspots to mouth-watering recipes from Kansas restaurants. TravelKS also spotlights breweries and wineries, scenic byways, amusement parks and zoos, and the best places for hiking, hunting and fishing. To view the TravelKS blog, visit: www.travelks.com/blog.

***NEW* Accidental Huntress** - Nadia Marji, associate editor of Kansas Wildlife and Parks magazine, writes about her adventures of hitting the back roads of Kansas to experience a lot of her outdoor "firsts." She pokes fun at her novice antics and shares pictures of her latest hunting successes. To view the Accidental Huntress blog, visit: accidentalthuntress.blogspot.com

Also, don't forget to find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kdwpt.



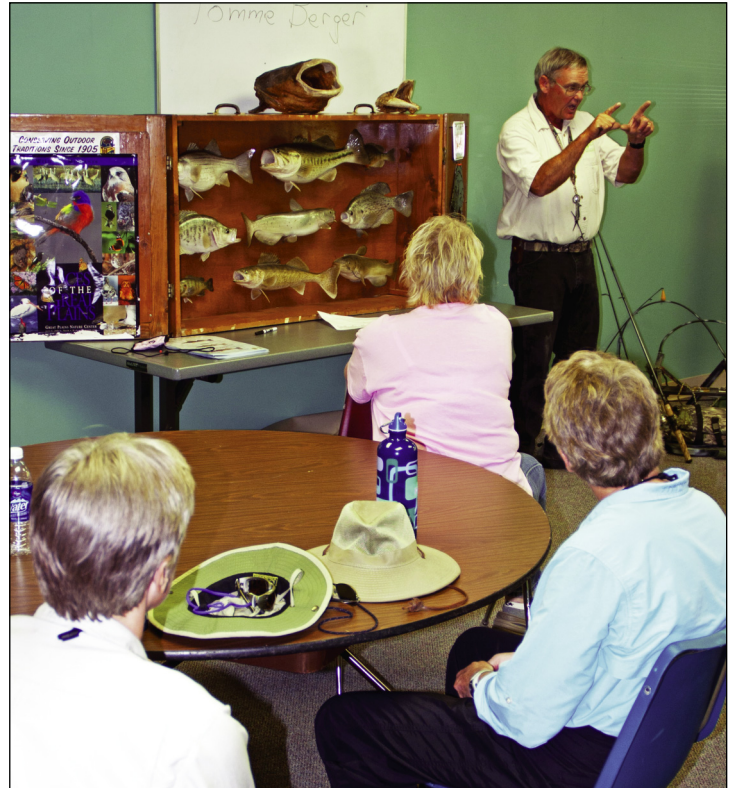
Two outdoor events near and dear to my heart are coming up in the near future. During my 38-year career with the department, I taught hunter, bowhunter, furharvester, and aquatic education, and I have found it impossible to give up teaching just because they turned me out to pasture.

Twenty-five years ago I was asked to be the fishing and fish management instructor and counselor at a new camp for kids called Outdoor Adventure Camp (OAC). OAC is a six-day camp at Rock Springs 4-H Center south of Junction City. The Kansas Wildlife Federation sponsors the camp, designed for 10- to 12-year-olds. This year's camp is June 2-7. For the first few years I was involved, my main focus was fish stuff. As time went on, my wife and I became camp coordinators, and I have instructed just about everything, including fish management, shotgun, archery, wildlife management, mammalogy, and plants.

OAC is run strictly by volunteers, and many of the instructors also volunteer their time to make camp interesting for youngsters. For such an event to last 25 years and be this successful, speaks volumes for its popularity and importance as an educational tool. Another testament to the camp's success are the facts that usually between 25 percent and 50 percent of the campers are returnees, usually at least three of the camp counselors were past campers, and we have a number of campers who are waiting to reach 16 so they can be junior camp counselors. And it doesn't hurt that Rock Springs is the perfect setting for an outdoor adventure.

I have many fond memories from OAC. One time a flock of turkeys was running up the hill while we were on a field trip, and a youngster from Wichita hollered out, "Look ostriches!" No matter how hard we tried, we could not convince him they were turkeys. One day one of the kids hooked a monster snapping turtle in the pool at Wa Shun Ga so I grabbed it by the tail and hauled it up to the dining hall to show everyone – the turtle was not happy having his picture taken multiple times. Then there was the flaming crawdad the first year of camp and the coining of the phrase "Indian Butt Weed" when kids learned that flannel mullen was used by the Native Americans as toilet paper. I could write a book about adventures at camp, and I have seen many youngsters gain a real appreciation for the great outdoors through OAC.

The other event on the horizon is the spring Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) Program that will occur May 17 - 19. When BOW began 20 years ago, I was asked to teach "Introduction to Fishing," and I have been teaching it ever since. Initially, BOW was held in September, but due to its popularity, it has been expanded to both a fall and spring workshops, with a few mini-BOWs thrown in between. I now teach or have taught "Intro to Fishing," "Advanced Fishing," "Tackle Crafting," "Limb Lining," "Bass Fishing," "Catfishing," "Lures and What They Catch," as well as mini-sessions such as "Kansas Critters," "Fishing Lure Jewelry," and "Rod and Reel Maintenance." My right hand instructor is Jessica Mounts, the fisheries biologist in Wichita, and I have told her that she needs to be ready to take over when I kick the bucket.



This is another event that has survived the test of time and continues to be as popular as ever. Generally BOW classes fill up quickly and often there is a waiting list. Connie Legere, Bev Knopp, and Jami McCabe are three of the ladies who have coordinated BOW through the years, and their energy, enthusiasm, and bubbly personalities have been stimulating and infectious. I am certain they are all related to the Energizer Bunny.

Bow memories are numerous, as well – like the 72-year-old lady who caught her very first fish in one of my Intro to Fishing classes. She was as excited as a three-year-old. Knock on wood, over the 19 years of BOW, every lady in my Intro to Fishing classes has caught a fish – the pool below the dam at Wa Shun Ga is an absolute guarantee for catching fish, rain or shine, hot or cold. I thought that a big wiper was going to pull one young lady right out of the boat one day at Milford Reservoir. Shore lunches of fried fish have been popular, as well, during Advanced Fishing outings. I have some wonderful volunteer fishing guides including two other ex-department employees – Paul Miller and Verl Stevens – who allow us to fish a full day at Milford each fall.

Through 38 years with the department, 25 years with OAC, and coming up on 20 years with BOW, I have enjoyed every minute of it. Sometimes I feel that I have gotten as much from these programs as I have given them and the time has really flown by. We'll see how many more years the fun will continue, and I certainly hope there will be others who will step in when I get too darned old to be there, they fire me, or when it is time to go to that wonderful outdoor paradise in the sky!

Planning Your Kansas Adventure



The Sunflower State abounds with exciting destinations and memorable experiences for residents and non-residents alike. But how do you find out what to see and do in Kansas? With both online and print options, we have just the right tools to help you explore the state – TravelKS.com, the *2013 Kansas Travel Guide* and the *2013 Kansas Outdoors Guide*. Each tool is crammed with information, photos and helpful tips for adventurers with a wide range of interests.

If you like to plan your adventures online, visit TravelKS.com, a one-stop shop for the public and the Kansas travel industry. Aptly titled, “There’s No Place Like Kansas,” you can use the site to plan your trip, learn about a variety of activities,

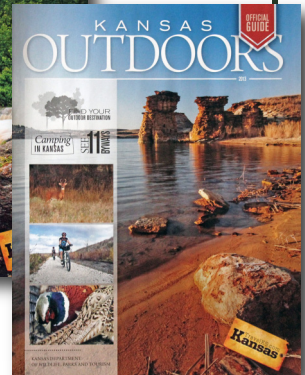
events, dining and lodging options, subscribe to *Kansas!* magazine, and locate places to buy Kansas products.

TravelKS.com also features “microsites” devoted to the Flint Hills and Kansas Byways, and microsites for Agritourism and the Kansas River National Water Trail are being built. Travel industry professionals around Kansas can also use the TravelKS web-site to reach a wide audience.

If you prefer a beautiful, informative travel guide to thumb through or take on your trips, there are the *2013 Kansas Travel Guide* and the *2013 Kansas Outdoors Guide*.

The *2013 Kansas Travel Guide* features more than 130 pages of stunning photography, brief stories about Kansas destinations, activities and events, along with hundreds of listings for things to see and do and places to stay or eat.

For outdoor adventurers, the *2013 Kansas Outdoor Guide* encompasses more than 45 pages of equally stunning photographs and brief descriptions of a variety of outdoor opportunities, such as camping,



hiking, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, boating, biking and Kansas Byway driving. Like the travel guide, the *Kansas Outdoors Guide* also lists hundreds of things to see and do and places to stay or eat.

TravelKS.com and the travel and outdoor guides are free. To request a guide, visit TravelKS.com and click on “Travel Tools”, or call (785) 296-2009.

KDWPT'S F.I.S.H. PROGRAM SELECTED FOR AWARD

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's Fisheries Section recently received the 2012 Sport Fish Restoration Outstanding Project award from the American Fisheries Society. The Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats (FISH) program was awarded in the category of Sport Fishery Development and Management.

The FISH program was developed to increase public angling opportunities by partnering with private landowners to lease fishing rights. The FISH program provides public access to private ponds, streams, and community lakes where angler fees had previously been charged.

A recent revitalization of the program using a combination of Sport Fish Restoration, fishing license, and Farm Bill Voluntary Public Access funds, combined with updated lease rates and incentives for landowners, resulted in a 181 percent increase in FISH locations. For more information, including bodies of water currently enrolled in the program and instructions on how to enroll your property, visit www.ksoutdoors.com.

WAY outside BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"DO PLASTIC WORMS COME FROM THE ARTIFICIAL TURF AT THE BALL PARK?"

Cheyenne Bottoms Canal Renovated

The Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area near Great Bend is a popular attraction for wildlife viewing and waterfowl hunting. Part of a natural land depression, the wildlife area's 19,857 acres comprise one of the most significant wetlands in North America. Its pools were developed in the 1950s to be managed for the benefit of wildlife.

Water management is critical to successful operations of the wildlife area. A system of diversion canals was constructed during its development to help supplement natural water flows during extended dry periods. Winding over 20 miles from the Arkansas River to the wildlife area, the diversion system is a combination of man-made earth bank canals and natural waterways. Originally, the system was capable of moving 80 cubic feet per second up to an allowed volume of 18,185 acre-feet per year.



maintenance, water will flow entirely by gravity; no pumps will be used. The canal is located four miles west of Great Bend, and stretches from just north of US-56 to the north fork of Dry Walnut Creek.

The \$5,479,000 construction phase began January 14, 2013 with Wildcat Construction as the contractor. As of mid-April, nearly 3,800 feet of pipe have been installed from the Dry Walnut Creek outfall southward. Construction is expected to be completed in July 2013, weather permitting, and the canal will be ready to serve the wildlife area once again when flows return to the Arkansas River.

Chad Grisier, KDWPT Chief Engineer



Over recent years, the flow capacity has steadily declined through five miles of the system. A 2010 study by Schwab-Eaton Engineering concluded that the clay soil liner had eroded away over the last 60 years, and as much as 43 percent of the water was seeping out. The flow was also being slowed by bank erosion, debris and dead timber. Combined, these factors resulted in an overall efficiency of less than 45 percent of original design capacity.

In 2011, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) authorized a project to improve the canal to its original design capacity. Benesch Engineering was selected for the design and construction management of the project, which will replace five miles of canal with 60-inch diameter, water-tight concrete pipe buried between 8 and 15 feet below the top of the canal banks. To minimize future





**BALL
BEARING**

THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

by Mike Miller
editor, Pratt

There are anglers who always seem to catch fish, even when no one else can. Usually, those are anglers who figure out where the fish are and what the fish want. Then they select the right tool to catch those fish.





Mike Miller photo

When trout are hitting No. 18 scuds on a high-mountain lake, a fly rod is the best tool for the job. However, if the wind comes up and blows 30 mph, a spinning outfit may be a better choice.

I love fishing equipment almost as much as my wife, Lisa, loves shoes. I'll admit, I have a long way to go to reach her level of accumulation, but I'm working on it. I love lures, rods, reels, boats, trolling motors, waders, depth finders, belly boats – you name it, if it has to do with fishing, I have one or want one – or ten.

I've known of anglers who forsake all high-tech gear to get back to basics and enjoy the purity of fishing – not me. If there's a new lure that catches fish, I want to own it, learn about it, and learn to catch fish with it. It's that eternal optimism that the next lure will be the one that really catches fish – and it's fun to learn new techniques and become proficient with them. The longer I fish, the more it becomes about mastering a technique and figuring out the fish. I love to catch fish, but I'm beginning to enjoy figuring out how to catch them more.

I've also known anglers who take up fly fishing and decide that it's the only way they will fish. I even had one angler tell me he would always catch more fish with

his fly rod than I would with a spinning or casting outfit – more on this later. I understand the draw of fly fishing. I have lots of fly fishing gear, and I love it. I have a rotary vice and a couple of bushels of fly tying materials. And I see the ballet

of a properly completed fly cast.

My point is not that you have to own lots of fishing gear to enjoy fishing. On the contrary – some of my fondest memories are of catching creek chubs with a wood slat for a rod, a 3-foot length of



Marc Murrell photo

When walleye move to the flats in April and May, a fast-action spinning rod and a spinning reel with a light line is the best tool for the job. Most walleye are caught drifting or fishing vertically in 6 to 15 feet of water.

monofilament, hook and a chunk of raw hotdog for bait. My point is that catching fish is about using the right tool for the job and using it correctly. In that little golf course creek where I caught creek chubs, the wood slat and hotdog might very well have been the best tool for the job – at least for two 9-year-old boys.

Using the wrong fishing gear for a particular fish or type of fishing is like trying to remove a Phillips head screw with a flathead screw driver. You might get it out, but it will take three or four times as long as if you would have used a Phillips head screw driver in the first place. I know there are water and fishing conditions when I will catch many more fish with my spinning outfit than a fly angler would catch with his fly rod, simply because I can cover so much more water. However, put me on a stream where the trout are feeding on nymphs, and the fly rod becomes the right tool for the job, outfishing all others.

If I'm on a reservoir in February and the crappie are schooled in 25



Gene Brehm photo

Flipping a three-eighths-ounce jig for big bass in flooded timber requires heavy equipment – a 7-foot medium-heavy rod, casting reel and 20-pound line.

feet of water, give me a long, sensitive rod and a spinning reel loaded with superline. Fly gear won't work and a casting rod is too heavy. Likewise, if I'm fishing for bass in a weedy farm pond, that long sensitive spinning outfit won't cast a quarter-ounce spinnerbait very efficiently, and it won't be very effective at wrestling a 4-pound bass out

of the weeds. Under those conditions, a casting rod with a medium-heavy action and a casting reel spooled with 20-pound mono or braid is the right tool.

With the right tool, you can use the proper lure or bait, land fish under certain conditions, and cover more water while searching for fish.



When the crappie move into the shallows during the spring spawn, an ultra-light spinning rod with 6-pound monofilament or superline is ideal. Most fish are caught on one-sixteenth-ounce jigs cast, fished vertically or under a float.

Here's another example. You're fishing a pond with a brushy shoreline and the crappie are in 3 feet of water, holding tight to brush. It's true that in 3 feet of water, you can get a weighted bugger or Clouser down to where the crappie are holding using fly gear. However, it will be more difficult to get your flies right next to the brush, and while you'll catch some crappie, you'll probably spend as much time snagging up and retying as you will fishing. However, tie a six-

teenth-ounce jig on 4-pound line, attached a small float about 2 ½ feet above the jig on your ultralight spinning outfit, and you'll spend more time fishing, lose fewer lures and catch more fish.

Last year while walleye fishing, I failed to take my own advice. My boat partner that day had a system and method perfected for catching saugeye and walleye while they were on the flats. He had light superline on a small trolling reel with a long, fast-tipped rod. At the

terminal end, he had a half-ounce bottom bouncer with a 3-foot monofilament leader. Attached to the leader was his secret weapon, the Slow Death hook, which is designed to roll slowly as it drifts through the water when a section of night crawler is attached. The theory is that the motion imitates the "death roll" of an injured prey.

His trolling reels had line counters, so he always let out the same amount of line needed to keep the bottom bouncer bouncing along the bottom for the speed the wind was pushing our boat and depth of the water. Everything in his system was there for a reason, and it was working.

I was stubbornly sticking to my jig and night crawler on my spinning outfit. It had always worked before, and I reasoned that if I got the jig and crawler in front of the fish they would bite. And a couple did.

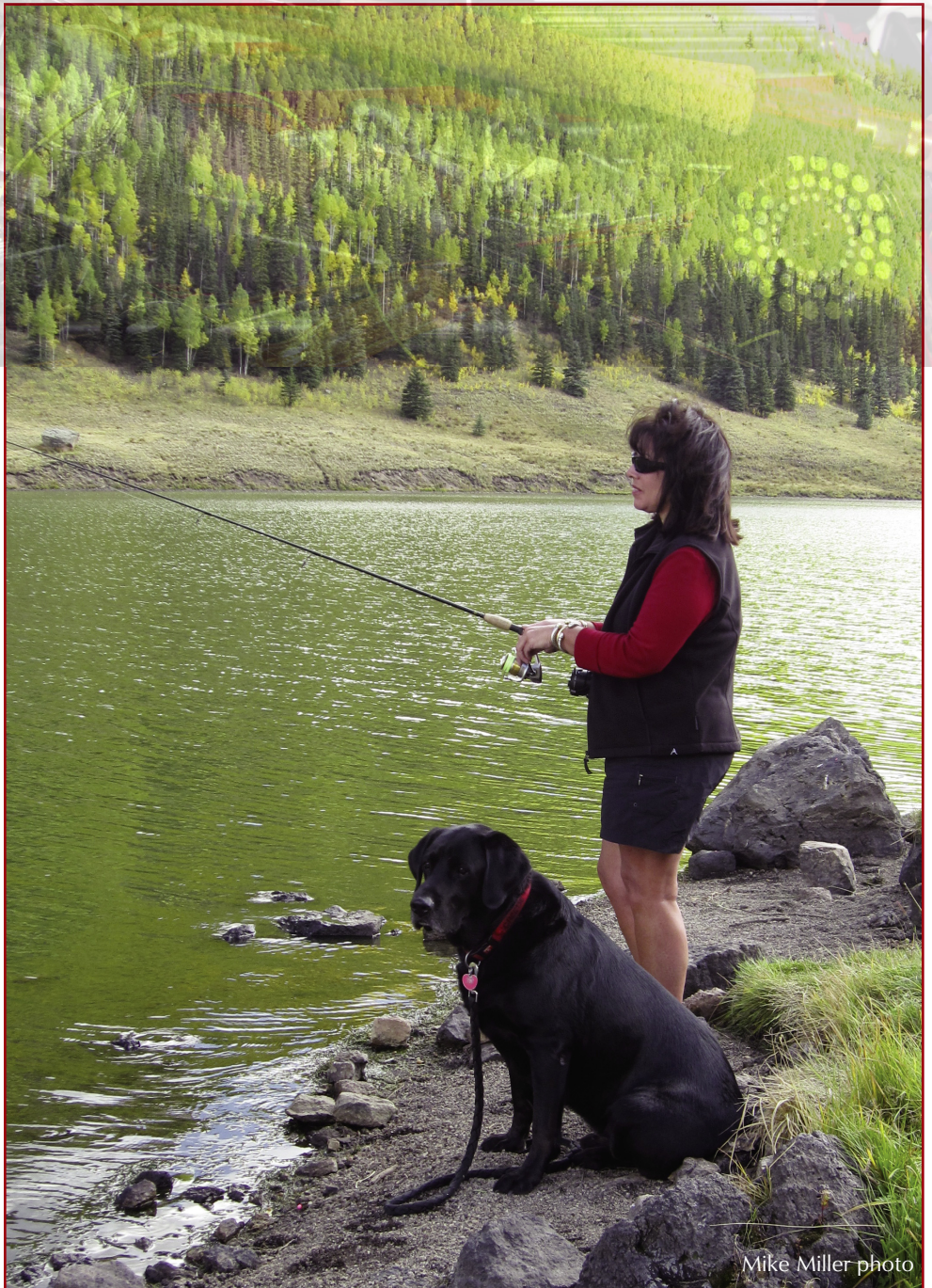
In the mean time, Marc was busy filling his livewell with keeper-size saugeye and catching and releasing several very nice wipers. He kept offering one of his trolling rods,



and I kept refusing to the point that it became a pride thing. When Marc put his fifth fish in the livewell, I swallowed my pride.

I only had one keeper-sized saugeye in the livewell with my jig and crawler rig. With one of his Slow Death rigs, I put four keeper fish in the boat in two short drifts, and we had two daily limits of saugeye. On that day, his rig was the right tool for the job.

There can be many factors to consider when selecting the right outfit and lure, including the species and size of fish, depth of water those fish are in, cover the fish are relating to, presence or lack of current, boat speed, wind, size and weight of lure. Obviously, small, light lures require light line and ultra-light rods. But maybe the most important factor is fun. Select a tool and method that you enjoy fishing with most. For tackle addicts like me, that means keeping a lot of tackle on hand, and that makes it fun for me. Whatever tackle combination you use, make sure you make fishing fun. ♡



Mike Miller photo

While many anglers may opt for fly gear to catch mountain trout, casting a spinner with an ultra-light spinning outfit allows the angler to cover lots of water to find fish.

KANSAS LEGISLATIVE SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS

by Mike Miller
editor, Pratt

With the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation mission in mind, "... to protect and advance hunting, recreation angling, shooting and trapping," Kansas legislators have established the Kansas Legislative Caucus.

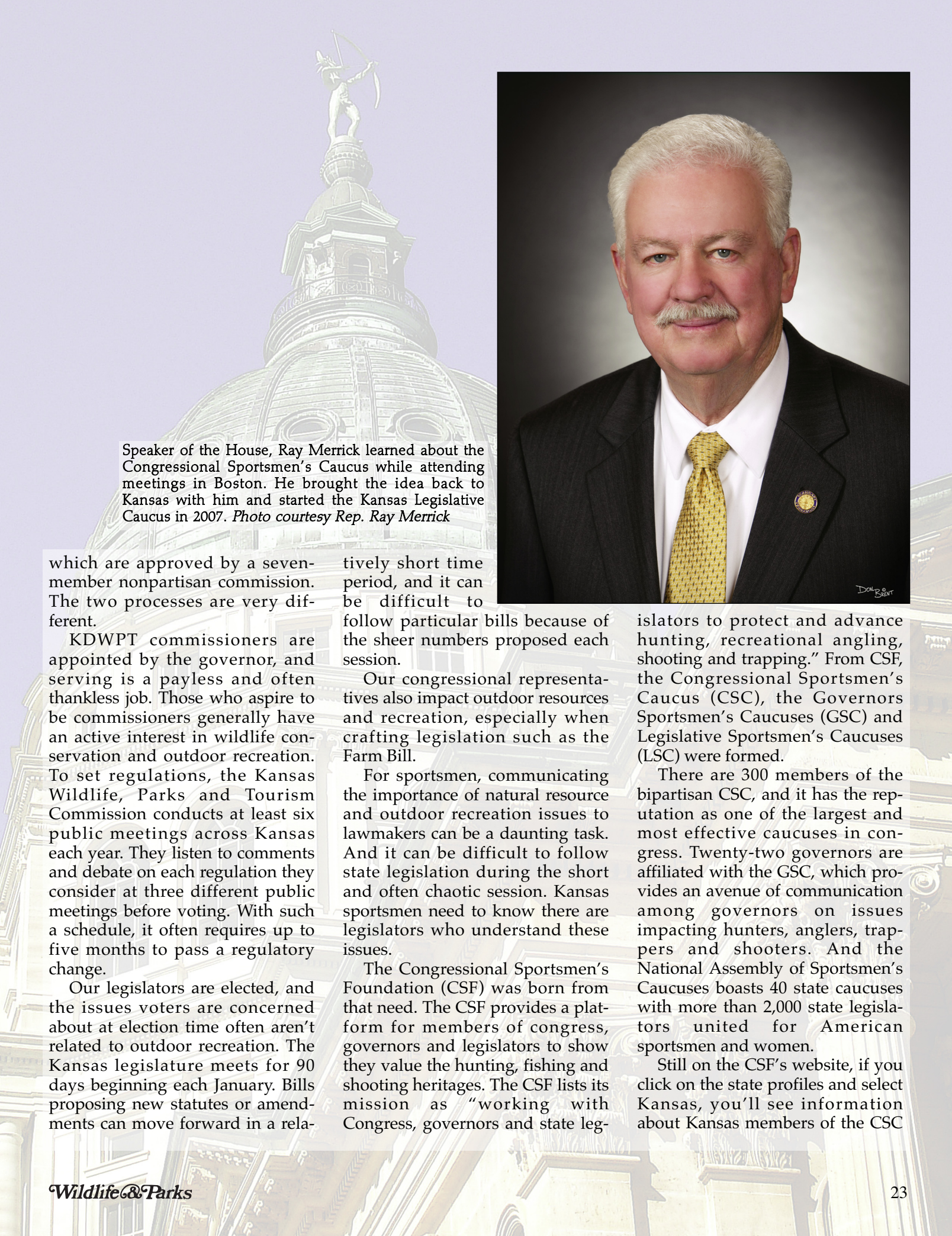
Did you know there is a Kansas Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus? Until last year, I didn't. Intrigued, I wanted to learn more, so I looked up the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation website at www.sportsmenslink.org. The site provides accurate information about the economic impact of U.S. sportsmen, and it promotes congressmen, gov-

ernors and state legislators who are hunters, anglers and recreational shooters. You might wonder why the hobbies of our elected officials are important. Well, it's complicated, and it's simple.

The politics of wildlife management and outdoor recreation can be complicated. Here in Kansas, sportsmen may take our outdoor heritage for granted. Many of us

Baby Boomers assume that everyone grew up hunting and fishing and appreciate the tremendous outdoor resources we have. However, complacency about our outdoor traditions is dangerous.

Natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation are regulated through a combination of state statutes, which are passed by our legislature, and by regulations,



Speaker of the House, Ray Merrick learned about the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus while attending meetings in Boston. He brought the idea back to Kansas with him and started the Kansas Legislative Caucus in 2007. *Photo courtesy Rep. Ray Merrick*

which are approved by a seven-member nonpartisan commission. The two processes are very different.

KDWPT commissioners are appointed by the governor, and serving is a payless and often thankless job. Those who aspire to be commissioners generally have an active interest in wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation. To set regulations, the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission conducts at least six public meetings across Kansas each year. They listen to comments and debate on each regulation they consider at three different public meetings before voting. With such a schedule, it often requires up to five months to pass a regulatory change.

Our legislators are elected, and the issues voters are concerned about at election time often aren't related to outdoor recreation. The Kansas legislature meets for 90 days beginning each January. Bills proposing new statutes or amendments can move forward in a rela-

tively short time period, and it can be difficult to

follow particular bills because of the sheer numbers proposed each session.

Our congressional representatives also impact outdoor resources and recreation, especially when crafting legislation such as the Farm Bill.

For sportsmen, communicating the importance of natural resource and outdoor recreation issues to lawmakers can be a daunting task. And it can be difficult to follow state legislation during the short and often chaotic session. Kansas sportsmen need to know there are legislators who understand these issues.


The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) was born from that need. The CSF provides a platform for members of congress, governors and legislators to show they value the hunting, fishing and shooting heritages. The CSF lists its mission as "working with Congress, governors and state leg-



islators to protect and advance hunting, recreational angling, shooting and trapping." From CSF, the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucuses (GSC) and Legislative Sportsmen's Caucuses (LSC) were formed.

There are 300 members of the bipartisan CSC, and it has the reputation as one of the largest and most effective caucuses in congress. Twenty-two governors are affiliated with the GSC, which provides an avenue of communication among governors on issues impacting hunters, anglers, trappers and shooters. And the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses boasts 40 state caucuses with more than 2,000 state legislators united for American sportsmen and women.

Still on the CSF's website, if you click on the state profiles and select Kansas, you'll see information about Kansas members of the CSC



The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation works with Congress, governors and state legislators to protect and advance hunting, recreational angling, shooting and trapping. Members of the group recognize the importance of our outdoor heritage and the economic impact of hunters, anglers and shooters.

– Sen. Jerry Moran, Rep. Mike Pompeo, Rep. Tim Huelskamp, Rep. Lynn Jenkins and Rep. Kevin Yoder. Governor Brownback is prominently featured as a GSC member. And below that is the leadership of the Kansas Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus – Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, Sen. Mike Peterson and Rep. Ray Merrick. There is other information on the page related to current legislation and figures about the economic impact of sportsmen in Kansas. However, to learn about the history of the Kansas caucus, I needed to talk to one of its founders. I called Speaker of the House, Ray Merrick.

Rep. Merrick said he was unaware of CSF until 2007 when while attending meetings in Boston, he was invited to a Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus event. When he learned more about the CSF, he immediately began making plans to establish a Kansas caucus. When he returned to Topeka, he talked with former representative Gary Hayzlett, Lakin, who is also an avid outdoorsman and shooter, and the

two planned the first Kansas meeting.

"Our initial meeting was held at the Topeka Country Club, and we invited every legislator," Merrick said. "We had conservation groups such as the National Wild Turkey Foundation that sponsored the meeting, and quite a few turned out and quite a few people signed up.

"After that, Gary and I ran it from the House side, but we didn't really have anyone on the Senate side involved. Our initial outdoor event was a sporting clays shoot out at Ravenwood," Merrick added.

The next spring, Merrick and Hayzlett organized a fishing tournament at Milford and because the shooting event had been so popular the previous fall, they included sporting clays on the day after the fishing tournament. The spring fishing/shooting get-

together has become an annual event.

"We still wanted to sponsor an event in the fall, so we started a pheasant hunt out near Pierceville, hosted by the Beavers Game Farm," Merrick said.

Those events have become regular get-togethers, open to everyone with an interest in hunting, fishing and shooting opportunities in Kansas. And they keep growing in participation.

"At the pheasant hunt last year, we had to do two shifts because we had so many who wanted to hunt," Merrick said. "And the fishing and shooting events have grown each year. I need to advertise the events this year because I have 54 new members on the House side, so we need to get the new members involved."

Currently, Rep. Merrick and Rep. Richard Carlson, St. Marys, carry the caucus mantle on the



Mike Miller photo

The Kansas Legislative Caucus conducts fall and spring events, fishing and shooting sporting clays in the spring and hunting pheasants in the fall. All legislators are invited, as well as others who want to promote Kansas and the great outdoor recreation opportunities we have. Herb Swender, Garden City Community College president, holds a Milford wiper at last spring's event.

House side, since Hayzlett retired from office last year. Merrick recruited Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, Grinnell, and Sen. Mike Peterson, Wichita, to promote the caucus on the Senate side.

"We have good representation in both sides of the building, and we're really promoting the outdoors and the opportunities we have here in Kansas to bring people in for tourism," Merrick said.

"We like to promote the economic impact sportsmen have in Kansas," Merrick added. "People really don't know how important that is, especially with the money that comes back to Kansas from the excise tax (Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration) on hunting and fishing equipment. It shocks people when they see the amount of money we get back."

Merrick feels that a primary role of the Kansas caucus is increasing awareness about the importance of hunting, fishing and recreational shooting in bringing people to Kansas. However, he believes caucus participants can be counted on to rally around a cause or issue that could impact Kansas sportsmen.



Merrick began hunting as a young man when some friends introduced him to duck hunting. Since then, he has enjoyed upland bird hunting, deer hunting and turkey hunting. He has also taken a record-class bear and moose. He and his wife enjoy fishing whenever they get the chance. Rep. Merrick understands why Kansas sportsmen and women are so passionate about

the outdoor heritage, and he knows how important they are to our state's economy. The Kansas Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus is helping get that message to any legislator who will listen, across party lines. For hunters, anglers and shooters, it's simple. We feel better knowing there are legislators who feel the same way we do about the Kansas outdoors. ♡

Bluebirds On Our Shoulder

by Andra Bryan Stefanoni
Pittsburg

A female bluebird peeks out of a non-traditional bluebird house primarily built as decoration, but it wasn't long before a bluebird family took up residence.

Want a front row seat to the lifecycle of birds? Consider installing and monitoring a bluebird nest box. By doing so, you'll also be helping a population that has seen a decline in numbers and, as a bonus, will get a bit of exercise and some insect control on your property.

Rural Pittsburg resident Elma Hurt did so after becoming a bird-watcher some 20 years ago.

"We saw some bluebirds in our backyard, so I bought a nest box and put it up. We had four babies, and that's what got me started," she said. "When I joined the local

Audubon chapter, being with other people who are birders and love the birds has a lot to do with my continued enjoyment and interest in it."

Hurt, who has become a local expert on bluebirding, now monitors 32 boxes as part of her "bluebird trail" — 24 on her home place of about 60 acres, and another eight boxes at other locations. As a result, she's been responsible for the fledging of hundreds of bluebirds, and is a frequent presenter on the subject at schools, libraries and to groups across Southeast Kansas and Southwest Missouri.

"There seems to be a growing interest out there in bluebirds. It's something I think all ages enjoy," she said.

This is cause for celebration, noted Bob Mangile, a charter member of the Southeast Kansas Sperry-Galligar Audubon chapter. In recent decades, bluebird numbers had been on the decline — partially because of human destruction of nesting habitat, and partially because of competition with non-native European starlings and House sparrows for nesting sites. Eggs and young also often fall victim to predators, including

Andra Stefanoni photo



house cats, snakes and raccoons.

But strides are being made in Crawford, Cherokee and Bourbon counties: Since 1999, Mangile has maintained a detailed database of bluebird boxes and numbers fledged. The first year, 10 participants installed and monitored 104 boxes, and saw 215 birds fledged.

Last year, 37 participants monitored 140 boxes and saw 306 birds fledged. In 2006, the peak year of the past 14 that Mangile has counted, 38 participants monitored 159 boxes and saw 504 fledged. All told since the count began, southeast Kansans have fledged 4,776 bluebirds.

Elma and her woodworking husband, Bob, tried several designs of boxes before settling on one they believed was perfect for improving chances: one by national bluebird expert Andrew Troyer, who gave them permission to reproduce it.

By constructing bluebird trails, civic organizations, youth groups, and individuals can assist in efforts to help bluebird populations recover.

As with all bluebird nesting boxes, one side is hinged to open for easy monitoring and cleaning. It is approved by the North American Bluebird Society.

In February, Hurt begins her annual trek along her trail to make necessary repairs, clean boxes out with a paintbrush she keeps in an apron tied around her waist, and readies them for

nesters which sometimes get busy as early as mid-March.

Throughout the spring and summer, bluebirds produce two to four broods. Each clutch usually is comprised of five light-blue eggs,

although that number can vary slightly. Two of Hurt's boxes each produced a rare sight this spring: six eggs.

Other southeast Kansas blue-birders also began reporting early clutches in their boxes this spring, including Cherokee County residents Larry Herbert, Baxter Springs, and Emmett Sullivan, West Mineral.





Andra Stefanoni photo

Elma Hurt, rural Pittsburg, checks on the status of five eggs in No. 21 on her trail of 32 bluebird nesting boxes. The longtime birder is responsible for the fledging of hundreds of bluebirds, and is a frequent presenter on the subject at schools, libraries and to groups across Southeast Kansas and Southwest Missouri.

“One of my boxes is at the Big Brutus Steam Shovel and Visitors Center, about eight feet from a sidewalk that goes into the museum and about 30 feet from the front door,” said Sullivan, who also maintains a box at his home. Despite having just the two, last year he fledged 19 bluebirds.

Herbert, who maintains 22 of his own boxes and nine at the southeast Kansas Nature Center south of

Galena, fledged 60 last year. This year, an unintentional nest box has been added to the list Herbert monitors: One built in a bright blue newspaper box at the edge of his driveway.

No matter where they’re reared, bluebird nestlings remain in the nest 17–21 days before they fledge, and for a few weeks afterwards usually can be seen perched on fences or shed roofs and swooping over a meadow in search of insects.

Beyond helping the environment, Hurt has found an unexpected bonus to maintaining her trail: “It takes me about an hour and 15 minutes to walk all the way around mine, and most of the time I try to do it twice a week, so that’s good exercise,” she said. ♡



Andra Stefanoni photo

Bluebirds typically lay a clutch of five bright blue eggs, although two of Hurt’s nesting boxes this year each have a clutch of six eggs.

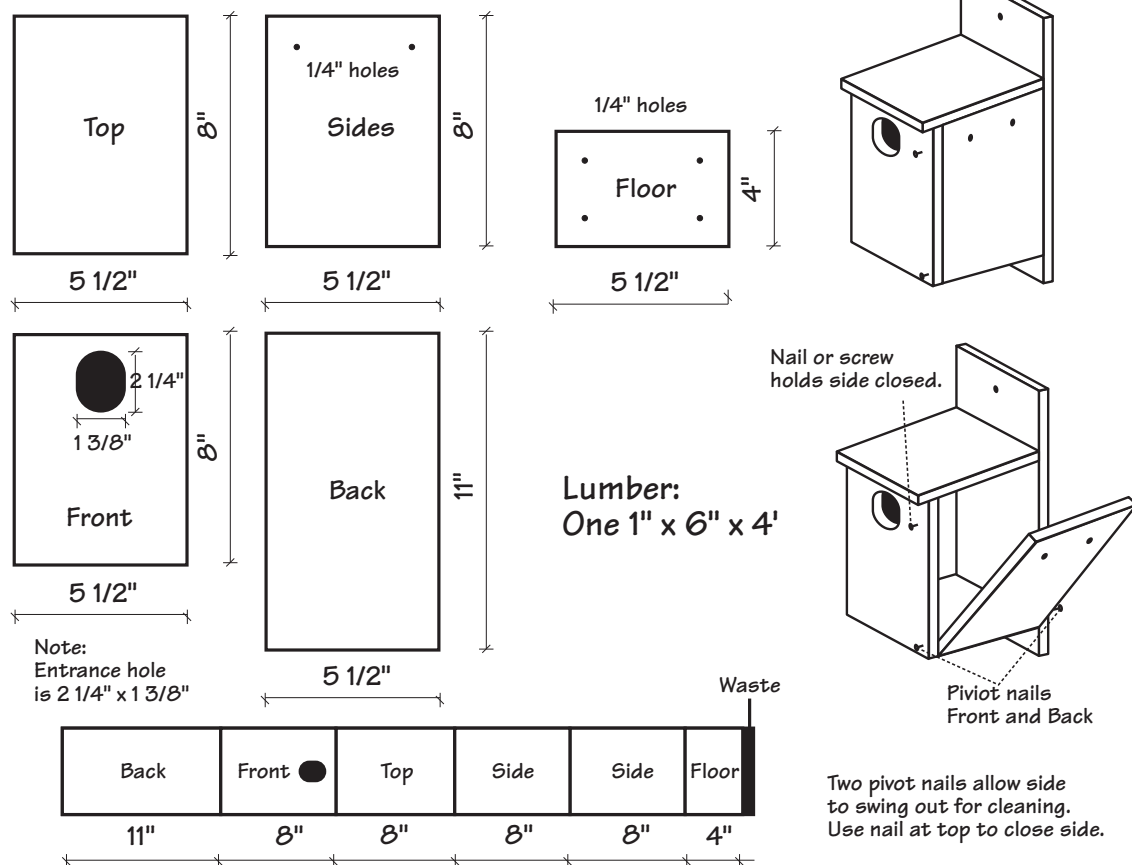
Andra Bryan Stefanoni is an award-winning journalist who lives in southeast Kansas on two acres that she and her biologist husband developed to attract wildlife. In 2003, they installed a trail of five nesting boxes. Since then, they have counted 73 bluebirds that fledged. Andra can be reached at andra.stefanoni@gmail.com

TIPS:

- Pick a good nest box design and locate it on a fence post away from trees.
- Position the opening toward the east or southeast if possible.
- Boxes should not be placed in heavily wooded areas, and should be placed 100 yards or more apart because bluebirds are territorial.
- Monitor the box regularly to see when the eggs are laid and when they hatch.
- Don't open the box after nestlings are 12–13 days old. It could cause the nestlings to leave the box before they are able to fly, reducing their chance of survival.
- Make water available in a bird bath or shallow water feature for adults and juveniles that fledge.
- Remove nests and brush out the box as the young birds have fledged.
- If setting up a trail, habitat is the key to success. Open, rural country with scattered trees and low ground cover is best.

The Kansas Ornithological Society, in association with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism coordinates a bluebird trail and nesting program using Chickadee Checkoff funding. Any organization may be eligible for up to 10 bluebird boxes if members are willing to place them properly, managed them and report nesting results. Requests may be made through your district wildlife biologist.

To build a house



ONLINE RESOURCES:
www.bluebirdconservation.com
www.nabluebirdsociety.org



1.3

TECHNOLOGICALLY FISHING

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

Advances in fishing equipment technology have been dramatic in recent years, and those anglers who learn how to use them will learn how to find fish and potentially put more fish in the boat.

17.4

Fishing has come a long way since cane poles, bobbers and five-gallon buckets. Sure, that's still a great way to spend an afternoon catching a few panfish from a local pond, but fishing has been transformed by technology in recent years. While rods, reels and other fishing equipment have stayed basically the same save some space-age materials, the advancements in fishing electronics have been dramatic over the last decade.

If you consider the advancements in televisions, cell phones, computers, iPods and the like, there's always something new, different, better and with more capabilities just around the corner. Fishing electronics, such as trolling motors, chart plotters and fish finders, have followed the same technological path. Manufacturers of these items are keeping up with the trends in an attempt to attract anglers and help them catch more fish.

"It's driven by people expecting new innovation and new technology. They have their iPhones and smart phones, and they're looking for products just like that, whether it's computers or marine electronics," said Chris Stratton, national retail sales manager for Lowrance's parent company, Navico. "Innovation is always changing and always evolving."

Lowrance-branded fish finders and chart plotters have a huge following in the central portion of the United States and the upper Midwest according to Stratton. They've come a long way since their familiar "little green box" flasher unit was unveiled in 1959. And the technology hasn't slowed down since.

"We first released our HDS-7 Gen2 Touch units last fall," Stratton said. "And then the 9s and 12s started shipping in January."

The new HDS Touch fishfinder/chartplotters were released in three screen sizes. They operate just like an iPad or most smart phones with the "touch,"

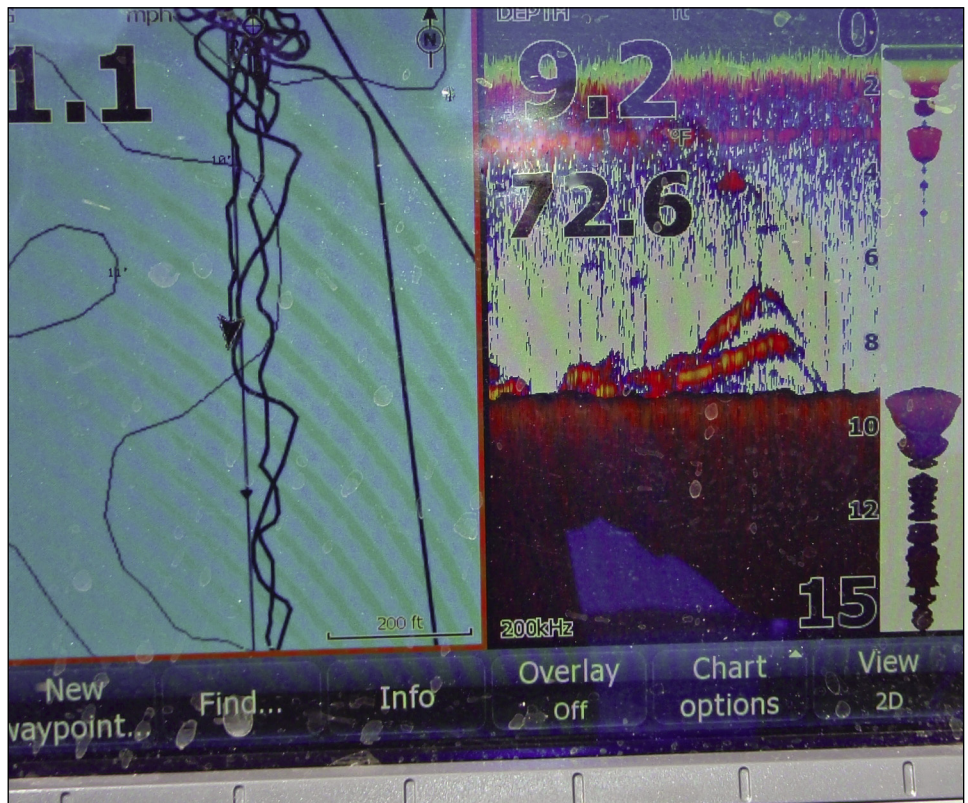
"drag and drop" and "swipe" features familiar to even preschoolers these days. The old school way of thinking meant keeping your hands and fingers off the screen of your fish finder. Not anymore.

"The biggest thing is how easy they are to use," Stratton said of their instant popularity. "You take out so many more key presses that you had in a key unit versus the touch that the time to be able to find menu items and manipulate the screen to make changes have been the biggest things people like."

Lowrance's new touch screens are intuitive with a wide ranging appeal in today's angling world. From beginners to pro anglers, from bluegill fishermen to crappie, bass and walleye, the touch units are catching on.

"The Elite Series anglers and the other bass guys want these units if they don't already have them," Stratton said. "Walleye guys are using them as well."

One of the initial concerns about the "hands-on"



Sonar units with GPS and depth-finding capabilities have been around for years, and they revolutionized fishing, allowing anglers to fish structure more precisely than ever.



7.2

Modern units, in addition to depth-finding capabilities, offer GPS, side scanning and down imaging. Some also have touch-screen technology, making them much easier to use. The upper right box shows down imaging and the lower right box shows side scan.

approach of Lowrance's HDS Touch units were fingerprints and smudges causing visibility issues with the screen. One angler on Walleye Central, a popular walleye fishing website and forum, said it wasn't an issue at all.

"You probably don't want to eat fried chicken and run one of the units, but normal fingerprints don't cause any problems with screen visibility," he said.

"And the screens can be cleaned easily with simple soap and water," Stratton said. "That doesn't really hinder the use of them."

Stratton said the new HDS Touch units are selling well as the word spreads about their ease of use and functionality. They haven't experienced any major problems with the new touch units and the only issues have been keeping one model in stock.

"We've struggled a little bit with the 12s as we weren't real sure with the price point of roughly \$3,500 and how those were going to sell, but they've been a huge hit for us this year," Stratton said. "When you're using Structure Scan, it's easier to interpret what you're seeing on the bigger screen.

With the bigger screen, there's more information that you can put on there and add and the easier it is to see bottom structure and composition, fish and all the details that are needed for anglers to make decisions on where they're fishing."

The new touch units all have the Structure Scan module built in now (you still need an LSS-2 Structure Scan transducer), rather than a separate box as before. Structure Scan allows 3-dimensional viewing and increases target separation, making fish and structure identification easier than the

17.4

traditional 2D sonar. It also allows anglers to search wider areas of the water column with the Sidescan feature looking out both sides of the boat.

Technology comes with a price, but it's really no different than the latest, greatest brands of cell phones or computers. The HDS-7 Gen2 Touch unit has a retail price of about \$1,550 and the HDS-9 Gen2 Touch unit sells for about \$2,450. Anglers of all kinds are embracing the changes and adding one, two or even three new units to their boats.

"People are familiar with using touch products, and they've been a success for us," Stratton concluded.

While fish finder technology and innovation has gone off the charts, so has the function of power for anglers' fishing vessels. Most boats used on inland waters had maximum horsepower ratings of 150 horsepower just a decade or so ago. Now, it's not uncommon to see similar-sized boats with 300 horsepower motors of various brands hanging off the back.

And even trolling speed power technology has advanced to the point it makes boat control simple with the touch of a button or buttons and GPS accuracy. Minn Kota's Terrova with i-Pilot revolutionized the way trolling motors are used in today's fishing world no matter the species pursued.

This electric steer motor utilizes GPS technology to give anglers greater flexibility and more freedom in utilizing different fishing tactics. One of the most useful tools is the Spot Lock feature which acts as an electric anchor and keeps the boat positioned on a spe-

cific location. With the simple touch of a button, up to six different points can be entered and stored in memory on the hand-held remote. As the boat drifts off of the spot the

trolling motor automatically turns on and adjusts its speed to try to keep the boat positioned within 5 feet of the locked-in coordinates. Wind and waves play a part in the



Electric trolling motors now come with GPS to help anglers stay on a specific spot and retrace tracks using an auto pilot function.

preciseness, but it's a valuable tool in many situations.

Another key feature is the Record-A-Track function. Anglers wanting to retrace their path can record a fishing track, up to 2 miles long, and then with the touch of a button retrace that track automatically letting the trolling

motor do the work. A Cruise Control feature can be used in conjunction with this track and adjusted in tenths of a mile per hour increments.

I was never a fan of the early electric steer trolling motors as they were too slow and unresponsive for my fishing needs. I relied

on a cable steer trolling motor for decades but some of the features of the new i-Pilots definitely piqued my interest, and I bought one in 2010 to see if the fanfare was warranted. I wasn't disappointed.

It didn't take but an hour or two to become accustomed to the feel and response of the electric steer motor and the functions of both the foot pedal and handheld remote. Depending on what fishing technique I was using and what species I was fishing for, I found I used one or the other or occasionally both. The i-Pilot made my fishing life easier and a camping trip in early June at Marion Reservoir the first summer proved it.

I took my twin boys and daughter fishing and my wife was along for the boat ride. I decided to drift an old road bed and let the kids pull spinners and Slow-Death rigs. As I began the first drift, I hit the "Record" button to start recording the track on the handheld remote I had draped around my neck. It wasn't long and the kids were reeling in fish left and right, and I handed my wife the "clicker" to keep track of how many fish we caught, nearly all of which we released.

I was kept busy running from one end of the boat to the other netting wipers, white bass and walleye. Once we were out of unproductive water I hit the "Record" button again to end the track and then "Return to Start" and set the "Cruise Control" to .9 mph.

The motor's memory and GPS

Electronic trolling motors may also have a remote control feature, allowing the angler to control direction and speed from anywhere in the boat.



6.8


tracking took us back along the same exact line of our initial drift and I never had to touch the remote or foot pedal. It's a good thing, too, as I was busy baiting hooks, helping with fish and netting the bigger ones. The kids were having a blast catching fish so fast I rarely had time to even sit down. Using just one rod each, the kids fished for almost three hours with nearly non-stop action and when the smoke cleared the fish counting clicker read 108. We did the same thing the next two days with the same results, and I had to wear a cotton glove on my right hand after day one as it was hamburger from taking off the kids' fish. I finally got to fish for about an hour at the end of the last day but that was fine by me as my kids will remember that trip forever.

I wouldn't have been able to fish that way with my previous trolling motors as I was always tied to the front deck and the foot-controlled pedal. However, with the handheld remote of the Minn Kota Terrova i-Pilot, I was able to control the boat and all of the trolling motor functions from anywhere in the boat at any time.

Even as this is written, fishing electronics and motor technology are changing. Minn Kota just released another version of their i-Pilot called i-Link which allows the trolling motor to communicate with a Hummingbird fishfinder and Lakemaster Digital GPS Map to follow depth contours and move to waypoints automatically. Innovation never rests, and the next big thing is just around the corner.

There's no doubt more tech-

nology will be developed in the fishing world to help anglers enjoy their fishing experience. Some will resist these advancements and that's fine, too, as new technology isn't for everyone just as with computers and smart phones. It's all a personal choice and I'm glad sev-

eral of these technological advancements have made their way into my boat. There's a bit of a learning curve, and it's not cheap. But it sure helps with the way I fish, and I think it has put more fish in the boat and made my time on the water more enjoyable. 



Anglers don't need to have modern technology to catch fish, but these tools can help anglers learn lakes more quickly and find more fish. Anglers still have to make them bite.



File photo

TEACHIN' TURKEY

text and photos by Nadia Marji
associate editor, Pratt

The Council Grove Youth Turkey Hunt provides young hunters with outdoor experiences they will remember the rest of their lives, whether they are successful in bagging a turkey or not.

Twelve lucky youth were recently provided the opportunity to experience a guided hunt for one of Kansas' most sought-after game birds – the wild turkey – but the youngsters came away from the experience with a lot more than filled game tags. For most of the participants, this was their very first hunt, and led by several experienced guides, it's no surprise they've now been bitten by the hunting bug.

It was day one of the 13th annual Council Grove Youth Turkey Hunt and the Sante Fe Trail Camping Area near Council Grove Reservoir

was quickly filling up with four-wheel drives, father-and-son teams and camo clothing galore. The intermittent sound of a turkey call could be heard from afar as seasoned volunteer guide Spencer Tomb held an impromptu class on calling birds, keeping eager youngsters occupied while their fathers signed them in.

One of the first things on the agenda was pairing up each young hunter with their volunteer guide. As 24 names were read, participants and guides quickly began their hellos and introductions.

Early evening activities included drawings for door prizes, a short lecture on turkey hunting safety courtesy of National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) conservation field supervisor Jared McJunkin, and shotgun practice and patterning following dinner.

Following target practice, each



Seasoned volunteer guide Spencer Tomb gives an impromptu lesson in turkey calling before the evening activities. Tomb made the slate call from a box turtle shell found during a walk.

group had the opportunity to briefly scout their hunting sites in order to get acquainted with the area while light was still present

and birds might be out.

Five a.m. the following morning, indistinct chatter filled the air as Saddlerock Cafe employees brought out plate after plate of biscuits and gravy. After couple glasses of orange juice and a few wipes of the eyes, the camo-covered youngsters curbed their excitement just long enough for a quick recap with program coordinator and Council Grove Wildlife Area manager Brent Konen before heading out.

One of those half awake youngsters was first-time turkey hunter Jacob Haag, who was lucky enough to be paired with McJunkin.

Following breakfast, the two hopped in McJunkin's truck and hit the road. It was clear on the drive out to the field that McJunkin was growing increasingly concerned about the high winds, stating that wind can sometimes be one of a turkey hunter's biggest adversaries



First-time turkey hunter Jacob Haag steadies his shotgun as he prepares to shoot at a paper target. Participants patterned shotguns and practiced shooting before hunting.



Walking back to the vehicle, guide Jared McJunkin and youth hunter Jacob Haag discuss their game plan for the next hunting spot after their first attempt proved unsuccessful.

due to the fact that it makes it hard for the turkeys to hear your calls.

Optimistic they might later get a break in the wind, the two exited the truck, loaded up their gear, and marched out into the darkness. A faint green glow bobbed up ahead as McJunkin led the way along a tree line edging an old corn field.

"Stay as quiet as you can," McJunkin whispered to Haag. "There's a very good possibility turkeys could be roosting right above us." Haag nodded his head in confirmation.

After a few more stretches, the two finally found the perfect spot. McJunkin immediately unloaded two turkey decoys and a pop-up blind, motioning Haag to enter it.

The two exchanged a few whispers, planted their chairs firmly in the ground,

and settled in for the morning.

As dawn made its way through the trees, it was apparent that the wind was going nowhere. Although a few distant gobbles and one brief glimpse of two males momentarily kept spirits



The hunters' view of turkey decoys from the pop-up blind McJunkin and Haag hid in while calling turkeys.

high, it was evident that the hunt wasn't going to be easy.

After several hours of no luck, McJunkin and Haag decided to try another spot.

The truck came to a halt once again and McJunkin and Haag prepared for another round of hunting. Taking quite and deliberate steps, and using hand motions to communicate, the two made their way to the base of two large trees perfect for concealment.

Immediately the new location offered exciting views as four young does ran across the field. Just the sight of wildlife kept Haag hopeful.

It was just a few moments later when that optimism paid off. In the distance, a large brown figure began slowly making its way towards the decoys. McJunkin immediately began calling, hoping to draw the turkey in close enough for

Haag to make a clean shot. Wary of approaching, the male turkey decided to put on a show for the hen decoy from afar.

With just a couple seconds at hand, Haag tried to steady his shotgun in anticipation of bagging the bird, but unfortunately the turkey spooked.

Haag grew disheartened as the turkey began to make his way through the trees just to the right of their spread.

Determined to get Haag a turkey, McJunkin tapped the first-timer, motioning him to stand up. With just minutes before the group was scheduled to meet back up for lunch, McJunkin decided they would give it all they had and try one more time.

This time, the wind served as a welcomed companion as the two needed the

sound to muffle their steps through the brush. What seemed like perfect timing, the wind grew calm and the sound of snapping sticks and rustling leaves grew to a halt. Haag would later explain that in that moment, they had encountered his last shot at success. Although far, the two decided to take the shot and go for it. As one loud bang echoed through the air, the two

watched the prize turkey run off unscathed.

Although clearly disappointed at his unfortunate miss, Haag leaned over to his guide and said the two words that proved McJunkin's efforts had not been in vain: "thank you."

It was the opportunity that meant the most to Haag, not the feathers.



National Wild Turkey Federation conservation field supervisor and youth guide Jared McJunkin stands with Jacob Haag. Although Haag didn't harvest a turkey, the day was a success, as Haag explained it wouldn't be his last attempt at turkey hunting.


Out of the 12 participants, eight youth harvested a turkey, seven of which were firsts. One of those lucky seven was 11-year-old Grayson Coulter, who was able to participate in the hunt as a result of a winning essay he wrote on hunting safety. The contest was hosted by the Emporia area chapter of NWTF. Equally fitting, Coulter also turned out to be the lucky winner of Saturday's drawing for a full turkey mount courtesy of JD Taxidermy of Council Grove.

Volunteer guides assisting in the hunt included Jon Zuercher, Brandon Houck, Jared McJunkin, Spencer Tomb, Allan Cashman, Mark Hawkins, Phillip Buttrey, Jim Evans, Josh Patry, Kevin Ehrlich, Josh Ehrlich, and Brad Richardson. KDWPT conservation officers Randy Benteman and Marvin Peterson were also present for the event.

Youth participants included Dane Banfield, Chase Bowen, Jack Brown, Anthony Cinotto, Grayson Coulter, Blane Fillmore, Nic Goodner, Zac Goodner, Jacob Haag, Drew Hays, Brandon Jackson, and Auston Korszeniewski.

Sponsors for the event included 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, American Eagle Outfitters via Jason Harris, and JD Taxidermy.

A special thank you is extended to the numerous landowners who generously allowed youth to hunt turkeys on their property, as well as Dale Burnett and Jason and Dara Fillmore for their contribution to next year's youth hunt.

For more information on how you can become a part of the Council Grove Youth Turkey Hunt, contact Konen at (620) 767-5900 or brent.konen@ksoutdoors.com. 



snowy plover



gray bat



least tern



whooping crane

Kansas Threatened & Endangered Species

by Mark VanScoyoc
stream program coordinator, Pratt

In accordance with state statute KSA 32-960, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism monitors wildlife species and their habitats and maintains a list of species that are considered threatened or endangered.

In 2011, Responsive Management, a wildlife survey and consulting company, surveyed Kansans to determine their knowledge and opinions on threatened and endangered wildlife. The survey also dealt with support for or opposition to various actions to protect threatened and endangered wildlife. The following is a summary of the results.

Approximately a third of Kansans (32 percent) say that they know at least a moderate amount

about threatened and endangered wildlife in Kansas. However, a majority (67 percent) say they know a little or nothing at all.

A slight majority of Kansas residents (55 percent) indicated they were aware that there are state laws to protect threatened and endangered species. Sixty-eight percent were aware there are state laws protecting the habitats of threatened and endangered wildlife.

Just over a third of Kansas residents (37 percent) have heard of

KWPT's nongame wildlife program, Chickadee Check-Off, and half are aware of the line on the state income tax form that allows taxpayers to contribute to Chickadee Checkoff.

The survey asked about eight potential threats to wildlife in Kansas. For each, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed that it threatened or endangered some Kansas wildlife populations.

- As expected, 83 percent strongly or moderately agree that

chemical and industrial pollution threatens some wildlife populations, and 76 percent strongly or moderately agreed that agricultural chemicals threatened wildlife populations.

- Oil field development (60 percent strongly or moderately agreed that this threatens some wildlife populations) and converting land into agricultural crop production (53 percent strongly or moderately agree) are well above wind energy development (26 percent strongly or moderately agree).

- Fishing and hunting were at the bottom (18 percent and 22 percent, respectively) while trapping is at 32 percent. Nonetheless, this means that about 1 in 5 Kansas residents erroneously think that legal fishing hunting and trapping threaten and endanger some wildlife populations.

Two statements measured the values people place on wildlife and plant life. In the first, 73 percent agreed with the statement, "Wildlife that is threatened and endangered in Kansas yet abundant in other states should still be protected in Kansas." In the second statement, 72 percent agreed that, "Although only threatened and endangered wildlife are currently protected in Kansas, threatened and endangered plant life should also be protected."

Respondents were asked about their support for or opposition to five actions that would potentially help protect threatened and endangered wildlife in Kansas. Seventy-four percent supported having an official state list of threatened and endangered wildlife, 90 percent strongly or moderately support) and for the state imposing stiff fines on those who harm endangered wildlife or their habitats (72 percent strongly support, 88 percent strongly or moderately support).


The three remaining actions all have a majority in support but with markedly less support relative to the top tier:

- The state restricting development of areas that are habitat for some threatened and endangered wildlife (47 percent strongly support, 76 percent strongly or moderately support).

- The state buying more lands that are habitat for some threatened and endangered wildlife (48 percent strongly support, 68 percent strongly or moderately support).

- The state restricting lake construction in areas that are habitat for some threatened and endangered wildlife (33 percent strongly support, 61 percent strongly or moderately support).

Ninety-one percent of Kansas residents agree that KDWPT should continue to identify and protect habitat critical to the existence of threatened and endangered wildlife.

Another measure of support is the rating given to KDWPT's programs to manage and protect threatened and endangered wildlife in Kansas. A slight majority of Kansas residents (52 percent) rate the KDWPT's programs as excellent or good, which is more than double the percentage who rate it only fair or poor (20 percent). 

KDWPT is currently conducting the five-year review of the list of Kansas species that are threatened, endangered, or species-in-need-of-conservation (SINC). The five-year review is required by the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1975. Any individual or group can petition KDWPT to propose an addition, deletion, or modification to the current lists by providing pertinent scientific information required within the petition.

The Threatened and Endangered Species Task Force, which consists of members representing various disciplines, including state and federal agencies and state universities, assists with the review. To determine if a full review is warranted, the task force examines updated scientific information and research for currently listed species and those proposed for listing by petition. Species experts are consulted and all available data is evaluated during the full review. After a full review is completed, the task force makes recommendations to the KDWPT Secretary and the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission at a public commission meeting. These recommendations and any amendments to

them are published in the Kansas Register for public comment for at least 90 days. The secretary then submits to the commission the recommended changes, if any, that should be made to the list of threatened and endangered species or SINC.

The current state threatened list includes six invertebrates, 13 fish, seven amphibians, seven reptiles, two birds and one mammal. The state endangered list includes 10 invertebrates, five fish, three amphibians, four birds and two mammals. The state species-in-need-of-conservation (SINC) list includes 17 invertebrates, 31 fish, two amphibians, seven reptiles, 15 birds, and six mammals. Species on the SINC list are deemed to require conservation measures to prevent them from becoming threatened or endangered. Complete lists can be viewed on the KDWPT website, www.ksoutdoors.com.

For more information or to download petitions, go to ksoutdoors.com, click on Services, then click on Threatened and Endangered Wildlife. Petitions must be received by July 31, 2013 to be considered for the current five-year review.

LIFE HUNTS

by Matt Stucker
natural resource officer, Larned

A group of hunters, landowners and game wardens have collaborated with Buckmasters American Deer Foundation Life Hunts to provide youngsters battling critical illnesses once-in-a-lifetime hunting opportunities.

Henry David Thoreau once said "If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with success unexpected in common hours."

Buckmasters American Deer Foundation (BADF) Life Hunts, a program designed to share the gift of hunting with critically-ill children and young adults, recently fulfilled the wishes of two young men who dreamed of hunting trophy white-tailed deer in Kansas.

Ryan, of Florida and Kiefer, of Alabama, were the two recipients of the 11th annual BADF Life Hunt last year in Larned. Ryan is currently fighting brain cancer, while Kiefer is battling cerebral palsy, and although their conditions were a requirement of the program, the next few days were about hunting trophy white-tailed deer.

On Thursday, December 6, both hunters and their families dined on a catered meal as they were introduced to the donors who made their hunt possible. Both participants scanned through trail camera pictures taken just days prior, picking out the exact deer they wanted to hunt. After many "thank yous" and "good lucks," both groups called it an early night in order to prepare for the morning ahead.

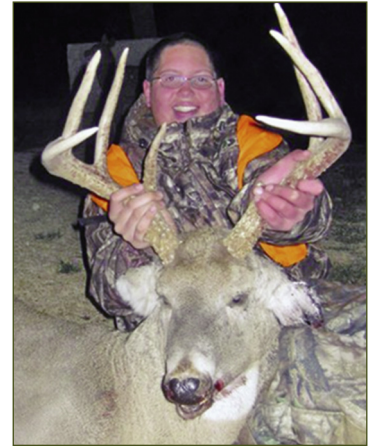
Bright and early Friday morning, Ryan and Kiefer saw several deer, but nothing that their impromptu

guides deemed as "shooters." It wasn't until the following day that either of the boys would find success, as they held off for the perfect buck.

The first of the two to come back with his prized buck was Kiefer. Sitting vigilantly in his blind, he watched a deer walk in that he was sure he had seen in the trail camera pictures just two nights prior. When it wandered closer, Kiefer knew it was his buck. He carefully aimed and pulled the trigger, taking home his very first Kansas white-tailed buck.

No stranger to adversity, the road was a little more trying for Ryan. Friday and Saturday were filled with plenty of deer sightings, but Ryan's trophy buck wasn't among them.


Sunday was the last day for Ryan to bring home the deer of his dreams. After an unsuccessful morning, Ryan remained optimistic for the evening hunt. Although his



guide was not as confident, they pressed on. Just about the time the sun was setting, a nice buck walked into the area. Although Ryan hadn't seen this one on the trail camera pictures Thursday night, it was definitely worth taking. After one clean shot, Ryan was on his way back to Larned with his trophy white-tailed buck.

Thanks to the generosity of Life Hunts program donors, Ryan and Kiefer were able to enjoy four days with their minds on things other than the illnesses they battle.

If you or someone you know would like to donate to the Buckmasters Life Hunts program, contact Tim Schaller at P.O. Box 197, Larned, KS, 67550. All donations are tax deductible.

For more information on the BADF Life Hunts program, visit www.buckmasters.com. 



2013 Sportsmen's Calendar

TURKEY

2013 SPRING TURKEY:

- Youth/ Archery/ Persons with disabilities:
April 1-9, 2013
- Firearm: April 10-May 31, 2013

2013 FALL TURKEY:

- Oct. 1-Dec. 3 AND Dec. 16-Jan. 31, 2014

BIG GAME

DEER:

- Youth/ Persons with Disabilities: Sept. 7-15, 2013
- Archery: Sept. 16 - Dec. 31, 2013
- Muzzleloader: Sept. 16-Sept. 29, 2013
- Pre-Rut Whitetail Antlerless Oct. 12-13, 2013
- Regular Firearm: Dec. 4 Dec. 15, 2013
- Firearm Extended Whitetail Antlerless
Season: Jan.1-Jan. 12, 2014
- Archery Extended Whitetail Antlerless
Season (DMU 19 only): Jan. 13-Jan. 31, 2013
- Special Extended Firearms Whitetail
Antlerless Season: Jan. 13-Jan. 19, 2014
(Open for unit 7, 8 and 15 only.)

ELK (residents only)

Outside Fort Riley: (proposed)

- Muzzleloader: Sept. 1-30, 2013
- Archery: Sept. 16-Dec. 31, 2013
- Firearm: Dec. 4-15, 2013 and
Jan.1-March 15, 2014

On Fort Riley: (proposed)

- Muzzleloader and archery: Sept. 1-30, 2013
- Firearm Season for Holders of Any-Elk
Permits: Oct. 1 Dec. 31, 2013

Antlerless Only

- Firearm First Segment: Oct. 1-31, 2013
- Firearm Second Segment: Nov. 1-30, 2013
- Firearm Third Segment: Dec. 1-31, 2013

ANTELOPE

- Firearm: Oct. 4-7, 2013
- Archery: Sept. 21-29 & Oct. 12-31, 2013
- Muzzleloader: Sept. 30-Oct. 31, 2013

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS (to be set)

DUCK

CANADA GEESE (including brant)

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

LIGHT GEESE

YOUTH WATERFOWL

EARLY TEAL

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

- Season: Sept.1-Oct. 31 and Nov. 2-10, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 15
- Possession limit: 30

EXOTIC DOVE

(Eurasian collared and ringed turtle doves only)

- Season: Nov. 20, 2013-Feb. 28, 2014
- Daily bag limit: No limit
- Possession limit: No limit

RAIL (Sora and Virginia)

- Season: Sept. 1-Nov. 9, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 25
- Possession limit: 25

SNIPE

- Season: Sept. 1-Dec. 16, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 8
- Possession limit: 16

WOODCOCK

- Season: Oct. 12-Nov. 25, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

SANDHILL CRANE

- Season: Nov. 6, 2013-Jan. 2, 2014
- Daily bag limit: 3
- Possession limit: 6

2013 Sportsmen's Calendar

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

PRAIRIE CHICKEN

- Early Season (East and Northwest units):
Sept. 15-Oct. 15
- Regular Season (East and Northwest units):
Nov. 16, 2013-Jan. 31, 2014
- Regular Season (Southwest Unit):
Nov. 16-Dec. 31, 2013
- Daily Bag Limit: 2 (East and Northwest Units) single species or in combination
1 (Southwest Unit)
- Possession Limit: twice daily bag

PHEASANTS

- Season: Nov. 9, 2013-Jan. 31, 2014
- Youth Season: Nov. 2-3, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 4 cocks in regular season, 2 cocks in youth season

QUAIL

- Season: Nov. 9, 2013-Jan. 31, 2014
- Youth Season: Nov. 2-3, 2013
- Daily Bag Limit Quail: 8 in regular season,
4 in youth season

SMALL GAME ANIMALS

SQUIRREL

- Season: June 1, 2012-Feb. 28, 2013
- Daily bag limit: 5
- Possession limit: 20

RABBITS (cottontail & jackrabbit)

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

CROW

- Season: Nov. 10, 2013-March 10, 2014
- Daily bag/Possession Limit: no limit

FURBEARERS

TRAPPING

- Season: Nov. 13, 2013-Feb. 15, 2013
Badger, bobcat, mink, muskrat, opossum,
raccoon, swift fox, red fox, gray fox,
striped skunk, weasel.

RUNNING

- Season: March 1-Nov. 1, 2013

BEAVER TRAPPING

- Season Dates (statewide):
Nov. 13, 2013-March 31, 2014

OTTER TRAPPING

- Season: Nov. 13-March 31, 2014
- Season Bag Limit: 2

FISHING SEASONS

BULLFROG

- July 1-Oct. 31, 2013
- Daily creel limit: 8
- Possession limit: 24

FLOATLINE FISHING

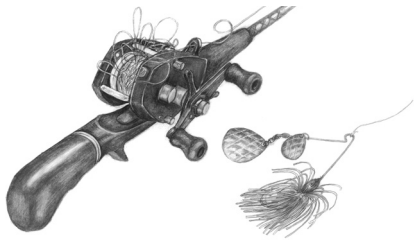
- July 15-Sept. 15, 2013
- Area open: Hillsdale, Council Grove, Tuttle Creek, Kanopolis, John Redmond, Toronto, Wilson and Pomona reservoirs.

HANDFISHING (flathead catfish only)

- June 15-August 31, 2013
- 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, 2013
- Daily creel limit: 2
- Season limit: 6 (Permit required)



Backlash

by Mike Miller

Creekside Memory

It was a simple family picnic. In my memory, it is idyllic – a picturesque park high in the mountains along a small bubbling brook. It was a perfect day, sunny with a cool pine-scented breeze. I was probably too young to fish on my own, but I’m sure I tried. I was obsessed with fishing before I could even walk, and the magical mystery hidden below the water’s surface enchanted me then as it does today.

I don’t remember any of the adults – mom, Dad, Grandma, Granddad – being serious about fishing, but I remember the day fondly. Outdoors in such a beautiful place, how could a four-year-old boy not have a blast? We ate sandwiches, drank Kool-aid, fished and enjoyed the cool mountain air.

By mid-afternoon, the sun slipped behind a mountain, and we began packing up to go home. In the mountain’s shadow it felt cooler and seemed later than it was.

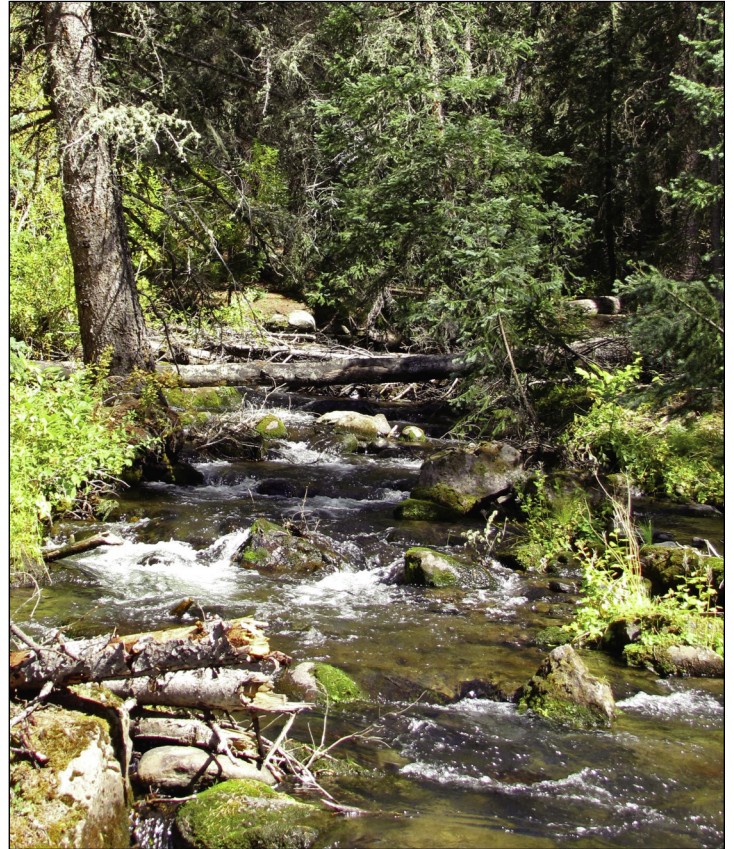
Even though we hadn’t caught a fish, I had to make a few last casts, a habit I still honor on every fishing trip. Standing on the bank, I looked in a small eddy below my feet and saw a trout dart under the bank. As I watched, it swam out then back out of sight. I hollered for help. I wanted that fish.

Soon four adults gathered around, encouraging me to drop my bait in front the fish and catch it. But I didn’t want to risk missing the opportunity. At that stage in my fishing life, a fish in hand was more important than who caught it, and I was sure Dad could do it.

Finally Dad relented, took the rod and dropped the bait into the swirling water. The fish immediately darted out and struck. Dad set the hook and handed me the rod. I pulled the little rainbow trout straight up on to the bank. We had it!

Having the fish in my hands was pure joy. Catch and release wasn’t in our vocabulary back then, and we ate what we caught. I doubt seriously if anyone could have pried my fingers from around the fish long enough to put it back, anyway. Granddad and I gutted the trout and we wrapped it in some spare foil and put it in the cooler. I was satisfied with our successful fishing trip. That little 11-inch trout was the high point of my day.

When we arrived home later in the evening, though, I couldn’t let Mom put the trout in the freezer before I han



Lisa Perez Miller photo

dled it more. I can’t explain it, but I was fascinated with fish. I examined every square inch of that trout, rolling it around in my little hands until Mom was sure I would smell like fish the rest of the week. That didn’t seem like such a bad thing to me, and I couldn’t understand why Mom was so worried about me being slimy and smelling fishy.

I know everyone who loves the outdoors has those memories stored away. A day or moment, seemingly insignificant at the time, that never fades. I don’t know why I remember that picnic, but I know it had an impact on my life. And I’m sure there is a connection between those early childhood memories and my love for fishing today. It shows that no effort to spend time with children outdoors is insignificant. I remember, and so will they. Pass it on. 