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Front Cover: Nadia Marji's 1-year-old black Lab, Kota, poses proudly with her AKC Junior Test Ribbon. Nadia Marji photo. **Inside Front Cover:** Brilliant with color, a painted bunting stops briefly for a snapshot before moving on. David Seibel photo.

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My Outdoors Kansas Bucket List

Through its official publication *KANSAS! magazine* and social media, the department's Tourism Division is running a promotion this summer called, "What's on your Kansas Bucket List?" We live in a diverse and unique state, and there are many historical, cultural, recreational, and culinary experiences available that I have on my "Kansas bucket list."

However, while I know the Tourism folks will include natural resource and outdoor experiences in their bucket list campaign, I thought I would make my own. Feel free to join in.

In no particular order:

- Hunt a spring turkey; believe it or not, Kansas provides some of the best turkey hunting in the Midwest.
- Catch a trophy-class walleye; Milford Lake in Riley County hosted the Cabela's National Team Championship walleye tournament in May, and the winning pair of the three-day contest brought in 10 fish that weighed a total of 43 pounds 9 ounces.
- Watch a fiery sunset in Western Kansas; you can't understand until you see it for yourself, but there may be no better place on earth to enjoy beautiful sunsets.
- Enjoy the sunrise at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area in the company of 50,000 or so ducks; not only is Cheyenne Bottoms considered a marsh of international importance for migratory birds of all kinds, it is a nationally-renowned waterfowl hunting destination.
- Watch in awe as a herd of mule deer "stot" away over the hill; it's comforting to know that mule deer, a prairie icon, are still thriving in Western Kansas.
- Hear and watch prairie chickens boom, battle and display on their lek; arguably, Kansas harbors more lesser and greater prairie chickens than any other state on the Great Plains.
- Tremble as a trophy-class white-tailed buck walks silently under my treestand; Kansas has become one of the top trophy whitetail destination states.

- Snag a huge prehistoric-looking paddlefish below the Chetopa City Dam on the Neosho River; the Kansas state record paddlefish, which weighed 144 pounds, is also the world record.

- Enjoy a peaceful evening on the porch of a state park cabin after a day of fishing; Kansas state parks offer more than 100 cabins for rent parks across the state – but you better make a reservation early, they fill up quickly.

- Catch a giant flathead catfish on a setline in the Kansas River; flathead catfish grow to amazing weights in Kansas rivers and reservoirs; in fact, the world record flathead, weighing 123 pounds, was caught from Elk City Reservoir in Montgomery County.

- Stand amid a bobwhite covey rise in front of a staunch pointing dog; bobwhite numbers have rebounded nicely in much of Kansas, reminding some hunters of the "good old days."

- Listen to the "giggling" calls of white-fronted geese passing over on a clear, cool October night; during the fall migration, whitefronts, Canadas and snow geese can number in the hundreds of thousands on central-Kansas marshes.

- Feel the adrenalin jolt as a rooster pheasant explodes from cover at my feet; Kansas pheasant harvests are always in the top three among pheasant hunting states, and all indications are that populations are recovering quickly now that the drought is over.

- Canoe the Kansas River from Kaw River State Park in Topeka to its confluence with the Missouri River in Kansas City; the Kansas River, one of only three public rivers in Kansas, is designated as a National River Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

You've probably guessed that I've already enjoyed some of these experiences. However, that doesn't mean I don't want to enjoy them again and again. So, I've listed them on my bucket list. If you think of some I've left off, let us know here at *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine. We're always looking for new and exciting outdoor fun in Kansas, so show us your outdoor bucket list. 

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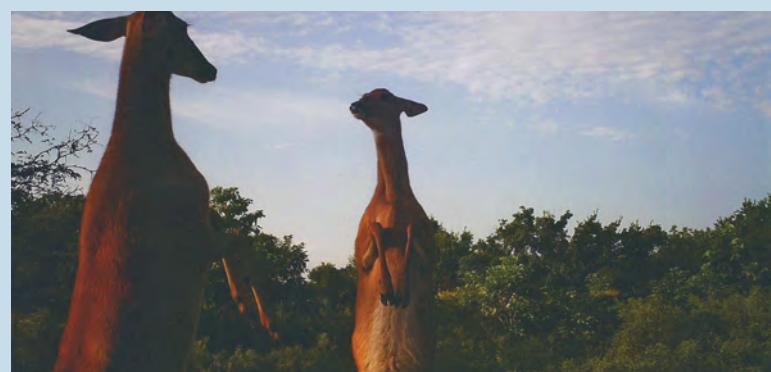
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Editorial Creed: To promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources, to instill an understanding of our responsibilities to the land.

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Letters . . .



JOUSTING DOES

Editor:

Two female deer jousting on a feeding area along Chikaskia River by a game camera.

Have never seen this before and didn't know if you would want to print this picture.

Stephanie Mcleod
Wichita

CANADA MEMORIES

Dear Mr. Miller:

Your "Backlash" of May/June 2015 brought me a full limit of memories. For starters, you mention Fort Francis, Nestor Falls and Sioux Narrows. I'd like to add International Falls, Rainey River, Kenora and Pakwash Lake to the area.

The enclosed picture of me with two northern pike was taken at Pakwash Lake in 1949. That fishing trip was Dad's gift to me for finally getting my degree in mechanical engineering.

For ancient fishing trip details, how about 79 years ago? The date on the enclosed newspaper article is June 1, 1936. (*Mr. Moore sent a copy of an article about fishing in Canada that appeared in his hometown newspaper, the New Hampton Tribune-Gazette, New Hampton, Iowa. Mr. Moore's father, Forest J. Moore, was superintendent of schools at the time and a subject of the article.*)

Robert L. "Bob" Moore
Wichita

Mr. Moore:

Thank you so much for taking the time to write. I can tell you have the same affection for that area of northwest Ontario that I do. It is a special place. Those were truly monster pike! I've never caught one that big in 25 years of fishing up there. I've caught a few muskies that were close, but no pike.

I loved the clipping you sent from the New Hampton Tribune-Gazette. Not only was it a joy to go back in time with them on the fishing trip, but the style in which it was written was also a treat to read. Thank you for that.

Mike Miller



BIRD BRAIN

with Mike Rader

Upland Sandpiper

Kansas is a well-known place for watching migrating shorebirds. We get a high percentage of the continental populations of several species, including Wilson's phalaropes, semipalmated sandpipers, stilt sandpipers, and white-rumped sandpipers, long-billed dowitchers, and several others. The marshes, playas, ponds, and upper ends of reservoirs provide critical habitat for these species during migration.

Recent work in the Flint Hills confirms that grasslands can also play a crucial role during migration for shorebird species not typically associated with wetlands, including killdeer, American golden plovers, buff-breasted sandpipers and upland sandpipers. These birds use prairie, especially burned areas, to forage and rest during migration. While the buff-breasted sandpipers, plovers, many of the killdeer and upland sandpipers continue to nesting grounds farther north, lots of killdeer and good numbers of upland sandpipers will stay here all summer.

Upland sandpipers are birds of open grasslands, nesting in the central plains to the upper Midwest and into Canada and Alaska. They were once very abundant in the Great Plains but numbers have steadily declined in the last few decades, mainly because of habitat loss in nesting and wintering grounds, and hunting along their migration route in the islands of the West Indies. (They cannot be legally hunted in the U.S.) This species migrates into South America, wintering on the grasslands of Argentina and adjacent countries.

They are taller than killdeer, with long, yellow legs, a straight yellowish bill, small head, long neck and very large eyes. They are a warm buff-brown, with darker spots on the upperparts, and a plain beige belly. Their call is interesting because it has a long, fluttery chatter, leading into a "wolf" whistle. They like to call in flight and from an elevated perch, such as the top of a fencepost, a power pole, and

even sometimes a power line.

Upland sandpipers set up territories in suitable grasslands, performing aerial courtship flights before nesting and rearing young. Nests are simple scrapes in the ground that can have a few small twigs or grass in them or be completely bare. Clutch size can vary from two to seven eggs. The young are able to leave the nest upon hatching, and wander around looking for insects under the watchful eye of the parents. If you are close to a nest or young, the parents will perform an excited distraction display in hopes of drawing any potential threat away.

Upland sandpipers are early migrants in fall, with south-bound migration initiated in mid-July. The time it takes to

nest and rear young to maturity is usually three or four months. They are nocturnal migrants and can be heard in large numbers after dark when the conditions are right. They make an unusual call when in flight, but once you know what to listen for, it's really great to go out on a late summer night and hear them flying over. They spend as much as eight months on their wintering grounds. They arrive back on their North American breeding grounds in April to start the cycle all over again.

Upland sandpipers, along with eastern and western meadowlarks,

grasshopper sparrows, dickcissels and a few other species found in abundance are signs of a vibrant and healthy grassland. We are lucky in Kansas to have a decent population of these species, but they are all in decline over most of their other range. Encroachment from urban and suburban development, oil and gas exploration, wind farms and other disruptions have had a negative effect on the grasslands they need to survive. It would be a shame to lose these species and that is why it is so important we strive to maintain our native prairie areas.

I run a couple of Breeding Bird Survey routes in the heart of grassland country in Ellsworth and Osborne Counties and am grateful that I still see quite a few of these unique shorebirds along the 25-mile stretch of the survey. Nothing says open prairie more to me than to hear the song of meadowlarks and the call of an upland sandpiper.



IT'S THE LAW

with Capt. Dan Melson

WHAT DOES A GAME WARDEN DO?

What exactly does a game warden do? The answer is more of a discussion. Modern conservation law enforcement in North America has diversified to meet the demands and challenges citizens expect and "need" from game wardens. Game wardens are and always will be the people management arm of the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation. Wildlife management includes the research, documentation, and recommendations of our biologists on how to regulate natural resources for the benefit of wildlife and all citizens. Game wardens are the face of KDWPT who meet the public in the field to ensure the regulations are complied with ensuring the best fish and wildlife management possible.

Pretty clear, right? It gets confusing with the rest of the discussion. Game wardens utilize much the same investigative tools as other law enforcement officers to detect, investigate, and seek prosecution of crimes. These tools include informants, surveillance, subpoenas, court orders, and search warrants. Because of these enforcement needs, several game wardens are also trained and equipped to specialize in advanced investigations.

Modern conservation law enforcement agencies have evolved to serve a major public safety role and KDWPT has followed suit. We are the primary agency in Kansas for water safety enforcement. Game wardens enforce vessel safety equipment requirements and are trained and experienced in BUI detection, the same as Kansas Highway Patrol troopers are in DUI detection. Also very similar to troopers (only on the water), we have wardens specially trained in boat acci-

dent reconstruction so that we can determine the cause and fault of injury in fatality boat accidents. These accident reconstruction investigations are used for both criminal prosecution and civil litigation resolution.

We have a mission of enforcing fish, wildlife, and boating regulations, and we direct our daily activities toward that mission.

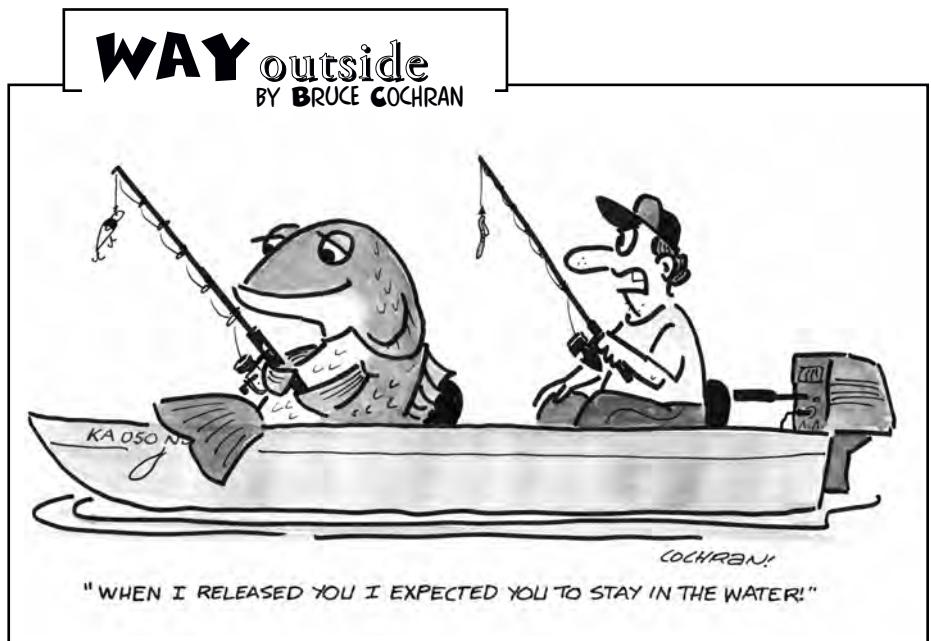
Game wardens also serve citizens in water-related search and rescues, as well as assisting citizens in need. Game wardens respond to calls of lost, missing, and stranded boaters, and persons on or around lakes, reservoirs and streams. An example of such call occurred a few



years ago when a game warden assisted two ice fishermen who became stranded when the ice they were on broke away from shore and floated onto the main lake at Glen Elder. The game warden's immediate response and actions resulted in saving the lives of both men before the drift ice was destroyed by wind and waves.

In serving the primary fish and wildlife enforcement role, game wardens are typically patrolling Kansas backroads where other law enforcement don't frequent. As a result, game wardens run into criminal activity outside of fish, wildlife, and boating. While providing law enforcement off the pavement, game wardens have also encountered crimes such as drug cartel marijuana grows and respond to assist when lawmen have been killed in the line of duty.

So what does a game warden really do? We have a mission of enforcing fish, wildlife, and boating regulations, and we direct our daily activities toward that mission. After that, we do what we are faced with at that moment in time, and there truly are no limits. Kansas game wardens are proud to serve the citizens of Kansas and have been since 1895. For more on the daily duties of a Kansas game warden, find us on Facebook under Kansas Wildlife, Parks & Tourism - Game Wardens.



AT WOODS EDGE

By Andra Bryan Stefanoni

It's hard to say who had the most trouble falling asleep the night before the special youth hunt that opened dove season in Kansas last September: my husband, or our two sons. It will be that way again this year, I'm certain.

Brad, who grew up just a few miles from where we're raising our family in the southeast corner of the state, hunted doves as a youth. He'd bring them home to his grandma or great-grandma, and they'd turn them into something delicious for the dinner table.

I grew up with a .22 rifle in my hand many weekends, target shooting with my dad in this area, and Brad and I both want our sons to treasure this land. In recent years, 70 acres of the Mined Land Wildlife Area (MLWA) in Crawford County has been planted to an annual sunflower crop by KDWPT assistant wildlife area manager, David Shanholtzer. The food plot is designed to attract doves and last year, it attracted doves and youth hunters in record numbers: 250 youth were chosen from a lottery draw to participate in the special hunt.

The MLWA is one of 39 wildlife areas with managed dove fields. Shanholtzer, who also grew up hunting in southeast Kansas, burns the land off in March, plants it in April, and works with area farmers to get it harvested at just the right time in August. The flowers take 90 days to mature, and another month or more to dry down in our humid conditions, so by the time they're really good dove food, the calendar must be at about 120 days. This year's rain put a literal damper on things, so the fields weren't planted as early. In turn, that means they might not get harvested in time for the hunt. But there will still be seeds. And that means doves.

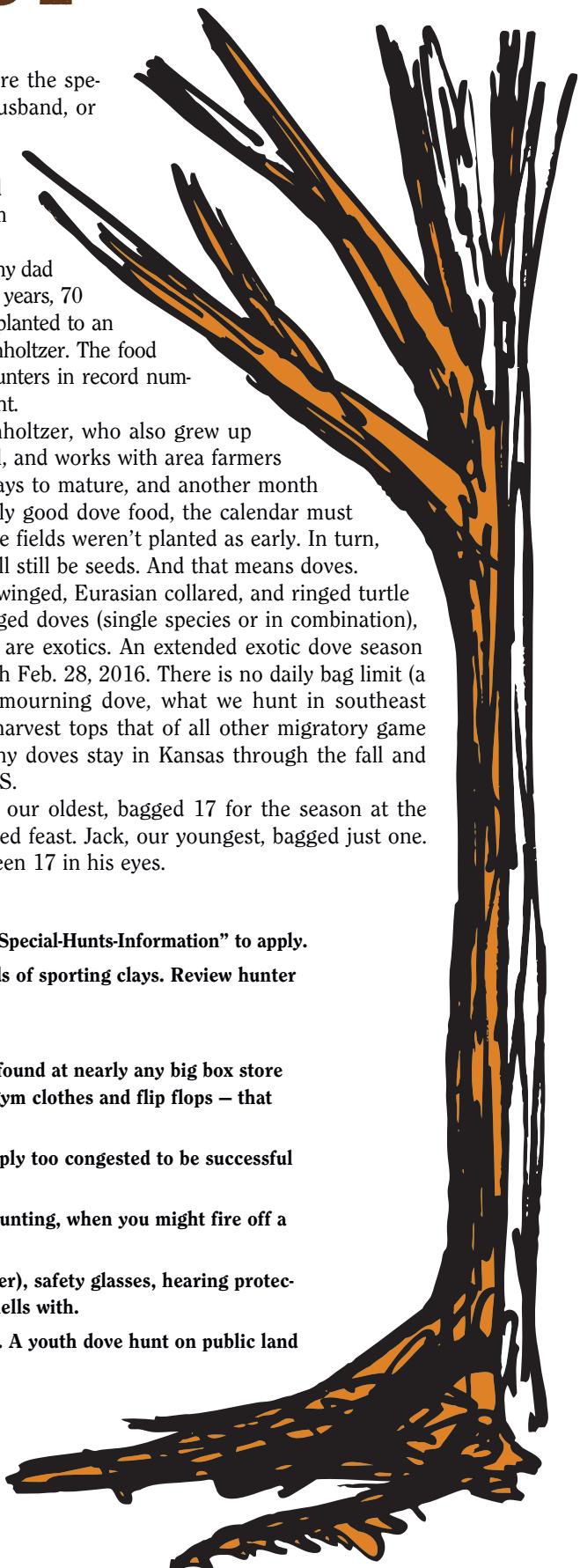
The dove season is Sept. 1-Oct. 31 and mourning, white-winged, Eurasian collared, and ringed turtle doves are legal game. The daily bag limit is 15 for morning and white-winged doves (single species or in combination), and there is no limit on Eurasian collared and ringed turtle doves, which are exotics. An extended exotic dove season for Eurasian and ringed turtle doves opens Nov. 20, 2015 and runs through Feb. 28, 2016. There is no daily bag limit (a feathered wing must remain on all exotic doves while in transit.) The mourning dove, what we hunt in southeast Kansas, is one of the most common bird species in North America, and harvest tops that of all other migratory game birds combined. With plenty of food and typically mild temperatures, many doves stay in Kansas through the fall and into early winter. As a result, our annual harvest is in the top five in the U.S.

Our sons certainly were happy with their harvests last year. Dominic, our oldest, bagged 17 for the season at the MLWA – a record number for him and enough for an ample, bacon-wrapped feast. Jack, our youngest, bagged just one. But it was his first and he was very proud, so it could just as easily have been 17 in his eyes.

Planning on trying a dove hunt with your child this fall?

- Those interested in special youth hunts must visit "ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/Special-Hunts-Information" to apply.
- A few days or a few weeks before the hunt, practice by shooting some rounds of sporting clays. Review hunter education rules: Know your target, proper gun handling, and so on.
- Non-toxic shot is required on managed doves fields.
- Invest in an inexpensive pair of camouflage pants and a t-shirt (they can be found at nearly any big box store and of course, sporting goods stores) for your son or daughter, and leave the gym clothes and flip flops – that includes you, Mom and Dad! – at home.
- Don't go first thing in the morning. That's when everyone goes, and it's simply too congested to be successful or safe. Wait until mid-morning; the doves will still be there.
- Take along at least a couple of boxes of shells. It's not like turkey or duck hunting, when you might fire off a few shells at the most, and that's if you're lucky.
- Pack a camo bag with a water bottle (it's usually still very warm in September), safety glasses, hearing protection, license and HIP permit, and plastic grocery bags to pick up your spent shells with.
- Leave your retriever, no matter how faithful and obedient they are, at home. A youth dove hunt on public land can be noisy, hectic and confusing for a dog.
- Remember a camping chair, back rest or stadium seat.

Editor's note: Andra Bryan Stefanoni is a lifelong Kansas resident and outdoor enthusiast. Her column, "At Woods Edge," will be a regularly appearing feature in *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine. She can be reached at andra.stefanoni@gmail.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/atwoodsedgelife. Her blog may be read at www.atwoodsedge.net.



HUNTING HERITAGE

with Kent Barrett

Is Pink The New Orange?

While checking my emails the other day, I saw an article about a legislator in Wisconsin who had introduced legislation to allow hunters to wear blaze pink camouflage and other blaze pink hunting safety clothing in lieu of the traditional blaze orange. As an old codger I thought to myself, "Don't they have anything better to do with their time than mess with hunter orange again?" But I stepped back a little and thought about the bigger picture.

The number of women and girls participating in state-sponsored hunter education classes is at an all time high. Each year, about 30 percent of our students are female, with some classes having nearly half of the students being female. When you take this into consideration, offering something such as blaze pink makes sense.

For years now, we as hunters have expressed a desire to welcome others into the community. We talk a good game about how much we need new people to join our ranks and become "one of us," but lately it seems that statement is literally what most of us mean. We would like everyone who comes to the fire to look, speak, act and even dress like us. That pretty much means that you need to be an old white guy with a beard, who dresses in camouflage clothing while walking the walk and talking the talk. Boy, are we off in that thought process.

The truth is, there are many people of all ages and all walks of life that are interested knowing where their food comes from. They want to harvest their meat and make healthy choices on food source. And many aren't like us. They may grow their own herbs and vegetables in their patio

gardens or buy them at a local farmers market or co-op. These folks will never dress in camouflage for leisure wear and they might even wear Birkenstock sandals or drive a hybrid car instead of wearing boots and driving a 4X4 pickup truck. Regardless of how different these people are, one thing remains similar, they want to provide their families with the best quality food through hunting.

But back to blaze pink; what does the science say? According to researchers of deer vision, pink is actually further away from the yellow spectrum deer can see than orange. This probably makes pink no less visible than orange to the deer. Blaze pink is very visible to the human eye, is typically not found in the natural environs and could possibly be as safe as hunter orange. But this would have to be tested and have the results based on fact.

For safety, we must continue to depend on the science to move us forward. But are we secure enough in our manhood to wear blaze pink?

Whether you have an opinion or not, the bottom line is we will have to wait to see how blaze pink works as being safe and effective for use in hunting clothing. But this doesn't mean we have to wait to welcome new hunters into our ranks, and I mean, truly welcome. We can all find ways to be more inclusive to new hunters who are looking to enter our ranks and it doesn't have to stop with clothing options. Being a mentor and helping others learn the safest and most effective ways to hunt, and perhaps most importantly, how to make use of the harvest, will invite others into the hunting world. We can all stand together as hunters, predators in a world where predation is natural, without having to expect everyone to come from any specific mold. We can all be hunters together.

Youth Anglers Dubbed State Champs

Nickolas Davenport and Hunter Baird, members of the Salina Stix Fishing Team, took first place at the 2015 Kansas State High School Fishing Championship at Milford Lake in Junction City May 31. One of 14 teams, the first place duo was able to tip the scales in their favor by reeling in three bass that weighed a combined 6 pounds and 7 ounces. Their first place spot at the championship qualified them for the High School Fishing Southern Conference Championship in Pine Bluff, Ark. this October, and earned them the title of state champions.

For complete results and photos from the tournament, visit highschoolfishing.org.

Persons interested in starting a high school fishing club can visit: www.highschoolfishing.org/getting-started/.

- KDWPT News



Fish Squeezler *Retired but not yet tired*

with Tommie Berger

KIDS 'N CATFISH

Wow, what a difference a month makes! Just a couple of months ago, we were under drought conditions and wondering what kind of summer we might be in for, and now the month of May has turned out to be one of the wettest on record. With the rains and runoff, there will be a lot of new fishing areas, so the prospects for good fishing in years to come look bright.

As for this summer, fishing is still very good, but it can be a bit tough for youngsters, especially on the big lakes and reservoirs. Here are a few summer fishing tips for parents, grandparents, and kids looking to wet a line.

One of my favorite summer fishing techniques is bass fishing in farm ponds and watershed lakes. If you don't have access to these types of waters, now is the time to start asking. Many landowners are willing to grant access, especially if kids are involved. If you do not have access to private lands, pick up the *2015 Kansas Fishing Atlas* and see if there are any public fishing ponds or watershed lakes in your area. The atlas includes private waters leased for public fishing, so you'll want treat the land like it was your own – leave gates as they were when you went in, make sure you don't leave any trash behind, and don't drive in when it is muddy.

When you find the right spot, try fishing for bass. It's fun in the summer, especially if the bass are hitting topwater baits. A pond with lots of vegetation can be difficult to fish for kids, but a floating plastic frog bait with upturned hooks can be the answer. It can be lobbed out beyond the vegetation and retrieved right into the bass zone; the edge. I've even had bass come right up through the vegetation to get a frog. As the kid advances in skill, a topwater popper or even a buzz bait will do the trick, too.

Summer bass are most active in the

early mornings and late evenings, but it's not chisled in stone. A year ago, I traveled to my favorite watershed lake early one hot summer morning. The temperature was predicted to get over 100 by noon, so I planned a short morning of topwater bass fishing. However, the fish kept biting and by 1 p.m., I had caught 54 bass on topwaters and my last bass on a buzzbait. I sure wish I would have taken a youngster along that morning!



If the bass aren't cooperating, there are other options. A gob of worms under a bobber will probably catch all the bluegill a kid could want. And, if a big channel catfish is on the agenda, just take the smallest bluegill, cut it up, put it on a hook, and fish it on the bottom. Some ponds and small lakes are home to monster catfish. If the kids get bored, there are always frogs to catch, tracks to identify, and if you take along a small dip net, there are lots of shallow shorelines to explore.

My second favorite summer fishing technique is wade fishing for catfish in one of our many streams and rivers. Rivers are probably our most underharvested fishing resource in Kansas. Of course, most of these flowing waters are on private land, but many landowners will allow access for fishing. And there are some rivers and streams listed in the atlas that are leased for public use. If you can find a stream or river that has a low water dam with a large pool below, you have found a gold mine for summer catfishing!

Worms are just about the all-around best bait out there, and they will catch all the small channel cats in a stream if you tie on a small hook, but the very best summer catfish wade fishing bait is dip bait. I used to make my own but these days I just buy Hog Wild Dip Bait. This stuff will catch pretty much only channel catfish. All you need is some small treble hooks, some square pieces of sponge, and enough weight to hold your bait down – I use a large split shot or a small egg沉。I like to wade downstream and fish the upper ends of the holes, right below the riffles. As soon as I catch a few fish here, I move on down to any brush or logs laying in the pool and throw right upstream of those. If there is no brush but some steep or undercut banks, I'll throw there. Sometimes, it seems that the water you muddy up as you move downstream stirs the catfish into a feeding mood, but I have had success fishing upstream, as well.

Summertime fishing with kids can be enjoyable and cool at the same time. Topwater bass fishing can hook a youngster on fishing and wade fishing, although almost a lost art in Kansas, can prove to be a great time. When I was a kid, we were in the water almost all summer long and I sure don't remember it being too hot to be outside. We always had fish in the frying pan and you and your kids can do the same. Now, pack your gear and take those kids fishing!

EVERYTHING OUTDOORS

Fishing For Fame And a Small Fortune

with Marc Murrell

The Cabela's National Team Championship (NTC) walleye tournament was recently held at Milford State Park, northwest of Junction City. Teams from all over the country - 185 to be exact - came to Milford Reservoir, and many of the teams showed up a week in advance to practice. Twenty states were represented including some as far away as Maryland, Ohio, Michigan, Wyoming and Pennsylvania. Twenty-six teams from Kansas were on the water, too. All had the same goal of bringing five of the biggest walleye to the scales each day of the three day tournament and winning the grand prize, plus bragging rights as the 2015 champions.

First place paid handsomely in the form of a brand new Ranger boat/Evinrude motor package with a Power Pole valued at \$68,000. Add to this the first place prize money of \$30,000 and there was a lot riding on the outcome. If the first place team was participating in the Ranger Cup program and fishing in a Ranger boat, they'd win another brand new Ranger boat/Evinrude motor package with a Power Pole. Otherwise, it would be awarded to the highest-finishing Ranger competitor participating in the tournament. Nearly \$275,000 in cash and prizes were awarded.

Teams qualified for this tournament



by fishing their local, regional or national walleye tournaments and placing at or near the top in events that took place the year prior.

The walleye bite at Milford Reservoir in the end of May was touchy at best. Only five teams brought 5-fish limits to the scales on the first day and many anglers showed up with only one or two fish. Eighty-three teams failed to bring a single 18-inch or better walleye to the scales. The leader after day one was the Nebraska Team of Bill Kunze and Greg Belgum with four fish weighing an ounce shy of 24 pounds.

Day two was much better and many teams found fish that would bite. Several teams that had failed to catch a

keeper-sized fish on day one brought 5-fish limits to the scale on day two. Some teams even jumped into the Top 25, earning the opportunity to fish the final day. The team of Ed Klepacki and Jim Miller from Illinois caught the biggest sack of the tournament on day two, weighing 24 pounds, 2 ounces, rocketing them from 11th place to a whopping 9-pound lead. Anglers Craig Athon and Robert Riddick would also make a big move on day two, climbing from 39th place to 25th place.

On day three, Nebraska's Scott Willis and Ben Seim, weighed four fish to take the lead, that is until the last team of the day approached the scale. Klepacki and Miller concluded the tournament with a two-fish bag, winning by slightly more than a pound. They were able to claim the title of the 2015 Cabela's NTC winners, the new Ranger boat package, and \$30,000 in cash. Willis and Seim were the highest finishing Ranger team and won the second Ranger boat package and \$12,500 in cash.

On stage, many of the contestants thanked event organizers, Milford State Park, Junction City, area volunteers, and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism employees who helped make the event a success. This type of event is a major undertaking and requires a team effort. By all indications, it appears that Kansas outdoors shined brightly once again.





Accidental HUNTRESS

WITH NADIA MARJI

PASSION - VS - PAYCHECK

I walk into my office to see a new stack of outdoor magazines placed on my desk, ripe for the reading. One cover dons a walleye, another a collared-lizard, the third, a brown bear. They come from all over the US from state agencies just like KDWPT. I quickly thumb through a few looking for inspiration, admiring photography, and to size up my peers. I take a picture of a design element I'd like to recreate in our next magazine issue. On the next page, an article on training a pup for upland bird hunting catches my eye. I flag it with a Post-it note to read it later.

My attention switches to my computer screen. Fourteen messages await my response. A fifteenth e-mail has just arrived from a coworker, displaying an album of his weekend fishing adventures. His is the first I read. I admire his catches, find a handful of shots I can use for future projects, and thank him for sharing. It's one of many emails that are a joy to open.

I break away from my inbox to finish writing a press release on upcoming, family-friendly outdoor events. I make a quick call to a park office to verify some details, and the staff member's enthusiasm for their kids' fishing derby brings a smile to my face.

I hang up the phone to continue typing when my attention is turned to the door. I have a visitor. While standing to shake his hand, I am complimented on my office décor – a beautiful mount of a wood duck pair, in particular. Little did he know, it's my favorite piece.

The conversation comes to a close and my Google calendar reminds me it's time for my weekly meeting. I grab my notepad, phone, planner, and a list

of items to tackle this week. I pass one of our fisheries biologists on the way and say "hello." He tells me there's a good photo opportunity just outside the building on the fishing pond. I thank him for the tip and scribble "camera" on my notepad. I'll investigate the pond after my meeting.

While waiting for the teleconference to begin, I thumb through the agency's Facebook page and answer a few messages. A father has shared a photo and brief account of his son's first turkey hunt. The child in the picture is beaming. I write back a thoughtful reply, glad he has found success in the field.

Each day is like this: an intertwining of business, wildlife, graphic design, meetings, photography, fact-checking, writing, and exploring. It's my dream job.

I'm lucky. Not because I "win" all the time (I assure you, I don't), not because I'm flush with money (I'm struggling like everyone else), and not because I always find a fish on the end of my line (I've had more get away than I care to think about), but I'm lucky nonetheless. I'm lucky because I get to do what I love almost every day. I'm fortunate to have a career that celebrates and fosters my passion for the outdoors, allows me to utilize my education in communication, advertising, marketing, and public relations, and surrounds me with like-minded coworkers who share those same outdoor passions.

My job is by no means stress free, I'll never get rich doing what I do, and I experience the same office dynamics that anyone in the private sector would, but I'm still lucky.

The majority of my days are spent in front of a computer screen, but every



An "outdoor office" adventure: banding geese. This is done during the molt cycle when geese are flightless for two to three weeks in late June and early July.

so often, I get to trade my desk in for an open field, a trail, a lake, or a blind, and get to experience and document the wildlife, activities, and places I work so hard to promote. If I had chosen another path, I may never have been able to witness the elaborate courtship display of a bright, blue-billed ruddy duck, or known what it's like to capture, tag, and release a wild Canada goose, or receive a letter from a stranger states away saying how much his young daughter enjoys reading my articles. It's on these days I am especially grateful to call *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine "home."

Is there passion in your paycheck?

Vacations Are Good For You!

Europeans understand something Americans have forgotten: vacations are good for you! A recent magazine article wondered whatever happened to summer vacation. More and more Americans are leaving vacation days unused. When they do take time off from work, they are often tied to email and cell phones even away from the office. This is not good for the employee, the family or the company. Research shows that time away – really away – from the workplace improves worker productivity and creativity, leading to better outcomes for both the worker and the employer.

However, the flat economy and long recession, coupled with uncertainty about job future, have made some people avoid expensive vacations. They are not boarding cruise ships or heading off to giant theme parks. Do we have a deal for these people!

Kansas state parks are an affordable way to "get away from it all," with camping options for every level of

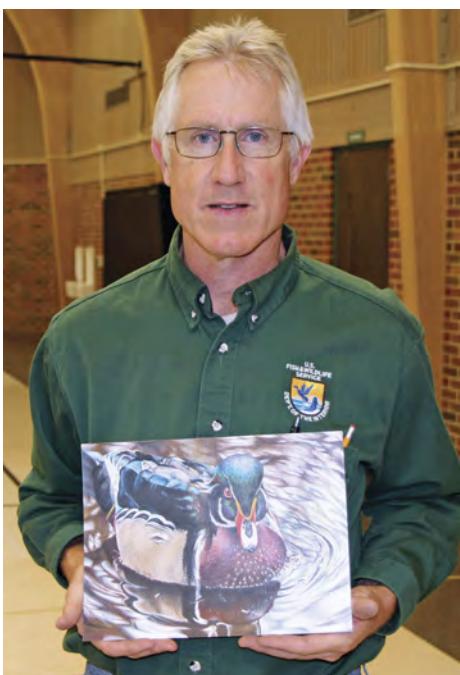
camper. You can pitch a tent, bring the RV or relax in one of our comfortable cabins. The parks on reservoirs offer beaches and swimming. Boating is also popular, either for fishing, water skiing or tubing. Some folks break out the lawn chairs to just sit and visit. We have lots of trails for hiking, biking or horseback riding. Without the profusion of city lights, there are more stars for gazing. And what memories can be made with s'mores over the campfire!

Parks are often less crowded after the July 4 holiday, but events are scheduled that are well worth attending. El Dorado State Park will host "Music in the Park" on the second and fourth Thursdays during June, July and August. The concerts are free for those with annual or daily state park motor vehicle permits or state park passports. Jet ski races will be held at Pomona State Park on July 24-26. The Wild Within You, LLC "Hell Creek On Heels" 5K and 25K will occur on Wilson State Park's Epic Switchgrass Trail on July

26. The Lovewell State Park Fun Day, with a host of activities, will be August 1. Lovewell's Campground Christmas, where campers decorate their sites or cabins, will be August 15-16. Friends of Pomona State Park will host their 2nd Annual RETRO WEEKEND at Pomona State Park on August 22 when vintage campers will be open for viewing. Tuttle Creek State Park's OK Kids Day is also August 22. On the second Tuesday of every month from May through September, the Hillsdale State Park shooting range will host a Novice Handgun Training course. Check our events page at www.ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/Kansas-Outdoor-Events as events are added often.

Whether you want a day full of activities or to just relax, Kansas state parks have something to offer this summer. Getting away from routine and daily stressors and out into nature is good for you. Come visit us!

2015 Junior Duck Stamp Winner



Barry Jones of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service holds the 2015 Kansas Junior Duck Stamp contest "Best in Show." This drake wood duck was illustrated by Billie Spears, 18, of Osborne.

17-year Cicadas Are Here



Have you heard the "buzz?" The 17-year cicada hatch is here and surfacing. A tasty treat for birds and other species, periodical cicadas occur in broods from May to August.

Go With The Flow

with Mark VanScyoc

Backroad Country Music

Cruising backroads, playing music and enjoying a beautiful Kansas summer night is a pastime many people enjoy. However, this summer there will be cruising of a different sort with different music occurring on some of our public wildlife and state fishing lake areas.

Ecological technicians from the KDWPT Ecological Services Section will be conducting surveys of frogs and toads through early September. Technicians will follow pre-determined routes consisting of 10 stops, beginning at least 30 minutes after sundown and ending by midnight. At each stop, the survey crew will listen for five minutes. Any frog or toad call heard within that time frame will be identified and recorded, as well as the intensity of the call. Weather data such as temperature, wind speed and direction, and cloud cover, will also be recorded at the beginning and end of the survey.

Frog and toad call surveys are one of many handy tools used to determine the presence of various species statewide; however, it does require a level of expertise because the surveyor must be familiar with frog and toad calls. If you're interested in conducting a survey of your own and want to learn how to identify frogs and toads by their call, consider visiting www.aza.org/frogs-in-kansas/. Nearly 20 different calls are available on the page, with additional information about each species, including pictures.



Another useful website for researching Kansas' many amphibians, as well as reptiles and turtles, is the Kansas Herpetofaunal Atlas found at webcat.fhsu.edu/ksfauna/herps/. Simply click "Species Accounts" and "Anura - Frogs and Toads" to access detailed information and call samples of several species.

Wherever you spend your summer, consider spending a night or two listening for these hoppy creatures. Frogs and toads have a lot to say, you just have to be willing to listen.

Scott State Park Gets a Tropical Visitor

Chris Lituma, a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Tennessee, had no idea a fleeting trip to Kansas would result in a monumental discovery. Lituma was leading a group of students through a multi-state field study when he decided to make a pit-stop at Scott State Park. Upon arrival, Lituma began helping students identify the various birds, but one bird in particular caught his attention.

"The students asked me 'hey, what's this bird?' and I briefly looked at it and assumed it was a black-headed grosbeak," said Lituma.

Students then looked up the grosbeak in a field guide to find it was not the same bird they were looking at.

"At that point, I took another look at the bird and almost immediately realized this was no grosbeak, this was something very special; something rare."



After consulting several guide books, and a brief discussion, everyone was in agreement they were looking at a piratic flycatcher.

Hailing from as far as Argentina, piratic flycatchers are tropical birds belonging to the genus *Legatus* and are the only species to hold this classification. They are strongly migratory birds, and have been known to fly out of range, but rarely as far as North America. According to the American Birding Association (ABA), less than 10 of these birds have been recorded in the U.S. If Lituma's sighting is accepted by the Kansas Bird Records Committee, it will be the first record for Kansas and the farthest northerly record of the bird, as well.

Nearly 75 birders from 13 states, including Virginia, flocked to the park to witness the bird first-hand.

- KDWPT News

Spice of Good Cooking

LET'S
with Dustin Teasley
EAT

Take a look in your spice cabinet and guess how long some of those containers have been there. I'll bet you find some that have been there for years. Now, remember a time you made a dish and it just didn't taste as good as the last time you made it.

Spices have a shelf life. Over time, the strength of a spice will diminish, but spices lose their potency at different rates. A good rule of thumb is the larger or more whole the spice is, the longer it will keep. Some seeds and leafy spices can be kept for up to four years if stored properly. However, I keep ground spices for only six months or so. Keep in mind that once a freshness seal on the container is broken, the elements and time go to work. I like to mark each container with the purchase date, so I can tell at a glance how long it's been in the cabinet.

And if you store your spices in a cabinet above the stove, shelf lives are even

shorter due to heat and moisture produced by cooking. If you have a ground spice that begins to clump, question its environment.

If you have a spice mix that seems to have lost its potent aroma, the seemingly logical fix is to just add more of the spice to make up in flavor. The problem with this theory is that if the spice mix contains salt, you may not be able to make up the lost richness before over salting your dish. When in doubt about whether a spice is past its shelf life, buy a new container even if you have to run to the store during the cooking process. A little delay in time is much better than a ruined dish.

Apart from storing your spices in a cool, dry, and dark environment, consider buying smaller containers. Not only will you be more likely to use the spice before it loses its potency, but it's also a great way to experiment with new and unfamiliar spices without overspending.

Spices are fun to experiment with. Find a new recipe you might not have considered before or dish up a new version of a family-favorite after building up your spice knowledge. It will open up a



whole new world of cooking. Let's face it, who ever decided to add cinnamon to BBQ was either thinking outside the box or got lucky. Either way, you'll never know what might be the next big hit at your dinner table until you try.

Keep those spices fresh, labeled and stored properly, and Let's Eat.



FISHIN'

with Mike Miller

No More One-liners

Used to be when I bought new fishing line, I worried only about what "pound-test" I needed. Monofilament was our only choice, and I had a favorite brand, so I bought 6-pound-test for my spinning reels and 14-pound test for my casting reels. The diameter of the lighter line let me cast light lures, and the heavier line held up for bass fishing and heavier lures. Today, there are many more choices.

Of course, I could still just buy my regular monofilament in the weights I prefer, but I've found some advantages to the other choices available. I'm particularly fond of the super lines, which are non-braided filament lines, such as Berkley's Fireline. I usually use the superlines in combination with monofilament or fluorocarbon leaders.

On my spinning reels, especially those I use for small-mouth bass and crappie in clear water, I spool the flame green 6-pound-test Fireline. The six-pound fireline has a small diameter and casts well with lures as light as 1/16-ounce. I like the colored line because I can see it from my rod tip to the water. Mono can disappear when you go through shadows, especially if you're wearing polarized sunglasses. I can tell by the angle of the line, from rod tip to water, where my lure is in relation to the boat, which helps me keep the lure near the bottom but not on the bottom. The superline lasts a long time, doesn't break easily, and has almost no stretch, so hook sets, even at long range, are more effective. There is also no spool memory with most super lines.

I do like to add a monofilament or fluorocarbon leader to the end of the superline. It makes me feel like the line isn't as visible to the fish at the terminal end, and it does allow for a little bit of stretch when a big fish darts away quickly or you pop the line to free a snag. I usually add about 6 or 8 feet of mono with a double unit-knot.

Next issue, I'll delve into fluorocarbon and braided lines.

What's That Smell?

The neighborhood kids routinely come over to use my basketball goal. As long as they don't crush my flowers, I figure it's a good way to keep from getting egged on Halloween.

I am full of good natured humor and am not above chiding the boys, especially when they get beat by the girls – it's just good, clean fun.

"Good job Eddie," I said, as the young girl who lives two houses to the south stepped around Eddie like he was stuck in the mud, "That concrete was cured ten years ago."

Normally, there were no rebuttals to my verbal assaults, but today Eddie had a bullet in his gun.

"Whadja say Mr. Redboots?" he replied, snidely.

Both teams howled with laughter.

The game was quickly over and the court was closed until further notice. I shooed the kids home amidst their cat calls and guffaws. Obviously, the wife had revealed intelligence that she wasn't cleared to share with the little brats. It's not my proudest moment, but now that the whole neighborhood knows, I might as well tell it here, too.

I was not yet old enough to carry a gun, but I loved to hunt with Grandpa. I was his two-legged retriever. It was cold that fateful day as we were walking through a soil bank field. The brush was tall and the pheasants were abundant.

"Gramps, I got to go," I said.

"OK, go then!" he said in a matter of fact tone.

"Number two, Gramps – I never did it outside before," I explained.

I looked around like there were people out there watching.

My Grandpa wheezed when he laughed hard and it sounded like an old locomotive starting to wind up. He was really chugging, but then said, "Hurry up and go over by that log. I will wait for you."

The operation was successful. I soon rejoined Grandpa and we exited the field without further incident, except that Gramps nailed two roosters.

We all piled into my dad's old '57 station wagon, glad to get out of the cold wind and feel the warmth of the old heater. Just as we got comfortable again, an odor thawed out and pried our nostrils open.

My Grandpa said, "I smell something bad."

"Me too," seconded Dad.

"Yea, it's bad," said Scott, my older brother, his nose crinkling up.

I smelled it too, but I quickly realized it seemed to be emanating from me. I was slyly trying to ascertain the "origin," when everybody began searching for the odor's source. A thorough self examination was no longer possible at this point.

Grandpa reeled around in the front seat and looked at me, saying "Did you step in something when you went to the bathroom? Check the bottom of your boots."

As I looked down at my little red pull-over boots, I was horrified by my discovery.

"I done pooped IN my boots Grandpa," I blurted out, without thinking.

If I could have stalled, I might have came up with something better than the awful truth. "The boots must have pooched out in back when I squatted down. They acted like little scoops," I tried to explain.

My horror was followed by awe when I realized I had actually managed to fill up both of them.

I went into a state of oblivion when dad swerved off the road and everyone bailed out. I thought it was from the smell, but turns out, they just wanted to witness the spectacle and laugh.

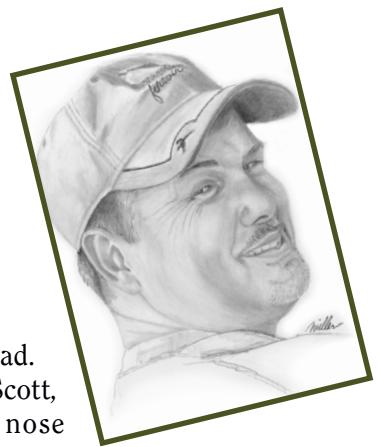
"Come out here and let me see that," wailed Dad.

"Oh, wheeze, wheeze! Oh. Can't believe it!" snorted Gramps, falling to the ground writhing in pain from his mirth. "I think I pulled some internal organ loose!"

It was a while before they were able to control their breathing enough to converse. When they finally caught their breath, conversation immediately turned to how they were going to transport me. On the roof or in the trunk were the two most viable options.

"I don't think the dogs would appreciate him being in the trunk with them," said Dad.

In the end, the little red boots were discarded unceremoniously in the trash along with my socks. I had to live through the reenactment the whole weekend. Little did I know, that memory would still stink 50 years later.



Royal Elder's Legacy

One of the true founding fathers of the Kansas Hunter Education program, Royal Elder, passed away on May 6, 2015. Elder had been retired from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism since 1984, but his legacy lives.

Elder attended high school in Yates Center, was drafted into the Army in 1942 and served in the jungles of Panama guarding the Panama Canal. After the Army, his love for the outdoors led him to become an assistant game warden in 1959. In 1960, he became the first game warden for the newly created Tuttle Creek Lake and he moved his family to Manhattan.

In 1972, Elder was appointed to the "Hunter Safety Administrator" position, with the enormous task of developing and implementing a hunter education program within the year. The Kansas Legislature had passed a law in that year requiring anyone born on or after July 1, 1957 to have hunter education certification before hunting on land other than their own. The law took effect July 1, 1973.

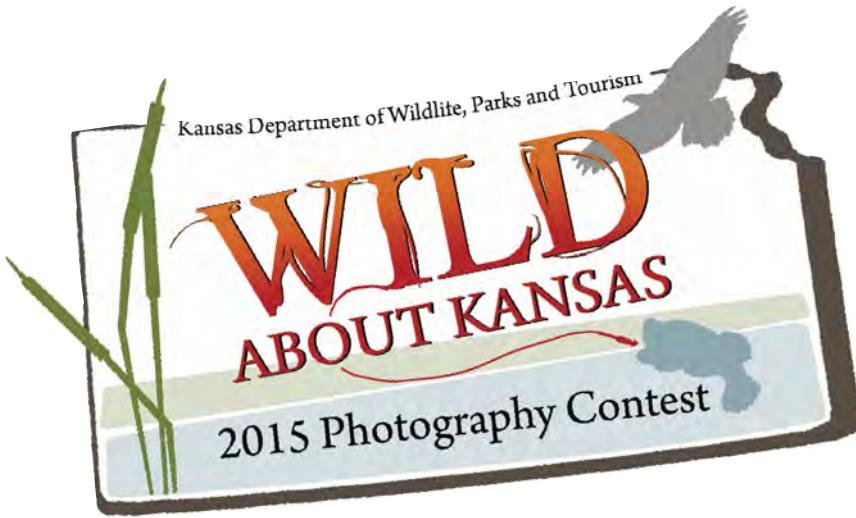
Elder was instrumental in developing the course, working with the National Rifle Association and National Shooting Sports Association, since both organizations had been providing voluntary courses. Elder took a leading role in writing the curriculum, producing the student manual, as well as recruiting and training the instructors needed to certify what was estimated to be 20,000 students for the 1973 seasons. Areas covered by the Kansas program included knowledge of guns; ammunition and safe handling skills; hunter ethics; hunter responsibility; conservation and wildlife management; and first aid and survival – much like our current curriculum.

However, before getting the students certified, the Kansas program had to first train and certify volunteer instructors. The hunter safety program was administered in the Law Enforcement Division, so game wardens were heavily involved in launching the program. By July 1, 1973, 4,000 instructors were trained and ready to teach a four-hour course. Amazingly, more than 36,000 students were certified the first year, almost twice what was estimated.

How will Elder's legacy be remembered? In the five years prior to mandatory hunter education, there were 213 hunting-related accidents, 24 of which were fatal. In the past five years, more than 40 years after Elder's program began, 69 hunting-related accidents with three fatalities were reported. Since its inception, the Kansas Hunter Education program has certified more than 500,000 students, and today hunting is one of the safest outdoor activities.

Elder is survived by his wife of 73 years, Shirley; three sons, David, Stephen and Kelley; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. He will be remembered as a husband, father, grandfather and dedicated game warden, but his name will always be mentioned in the history of Kansas Hunter Education.





Show us what makes YOU wild about Kansas!

Photo submissions for the 3rd annual "Wild About Kansas" photo contest are being accepted now through Oct. 23, 2015, and new for 2015, photographers of ALL ages and skill levels can participate.

Participants can submit photos in three categories: wildlife, outdoor recreation or landscapes. There is no fee to enter, and the contest is open to both residents and nonresidents.

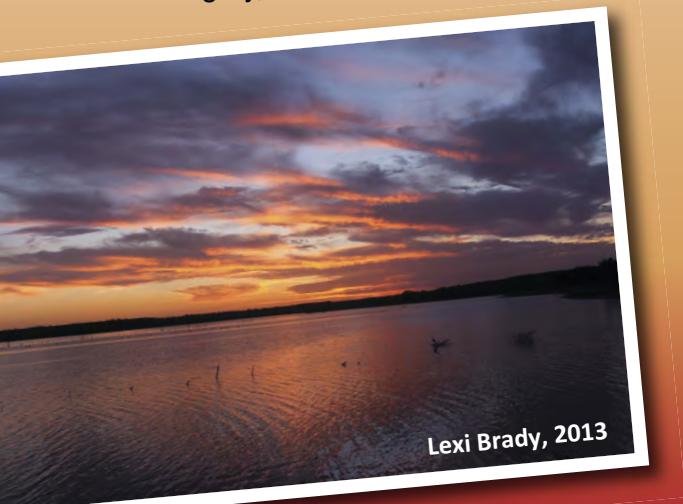
"Kansas is a state filled with a plethora of diverse and awe-inspiring natural resources and this contest is just one more way we can continue to appreciate and enjoy them," said associate editor, Nadia Marji.

RULES

Photographers can submit up to three photos. Photos must be taken within the state of Kansas and must be the entrant's original work.

JUDGING

Each photo will be judged on creativity, composition, subject matter, lighting, and the overall sharpness. First, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes will be awarded in each category, as well as one



Lexi Brady, 2013

honorable mention per category. Winners will be featured in the 2016 *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* January/February photo issue.

DEADLINE

Entries must be received no later than **5 p.m. on Oct. 23, 2015**. An entry form must be submitted for each participant. Photo format should be JPEG or TIFF and file size should be not less than 1mb and not more than 5mb.

For more information and entry forms, visit ksoutdoors.com/services, or contact Nadia Marji at nadia.marji@ksoutdoors.com.



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The Outdoor Store has the right gift for every season, for everyone.



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To view the full line of Outdoor Store merchandise,
visit ksoutdoors.com and click “Services / Outdoor Store.”

Duck Hunting Zones

Duck hunting zones allow independent hunting seasons in two or more areas within the state and are designed to provide equitable distribution of harvest opportunity, matching seasons dates with available habitat types, migration chronology and hunter preferences.

Zones must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and once established are kept in place for five years. This year, Kansas has the opportunity to alter its current zones for the next five-year period, which will begin with the 2016-2017 seasons.

Currently, Kansas is split into four zones. However the High Plains Zone in western Kansas, (west of Hwy 283) is a Mallard Management Zone established by the USFWS and cannot be changed. The other three zones, Low Plains Early, Low Plains Late and Low Plains Southeast, have been established to provide maximum hunting opportunity. The Early Zone includes shallow-water marshes such as Jamestown, Cheyenne Bottoms, and McPherson, which often freeze up by early to mid-December. Earlier hunting season segments in this zone allow hunters to take advantage of early migrants such as

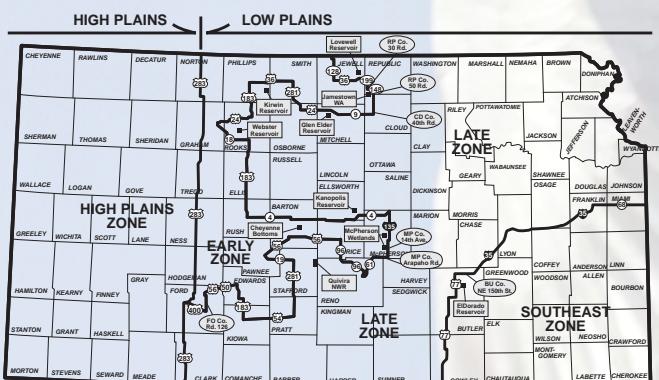
teal, wigeon, gadwalls and shovelers. In the Low Plains Late Zone, hunting season segments start a couple of weeks later and provide hunters with mallard hunting opportunities on rivers, streams, and reservoirs. The Low Plains Southeast Zone was established to allow even later season segments, taking advantage of later migration patterns for this part of the state.

The Low Plains Southeast Zone was established in 2010, and it has not been without some controversy. Biologists, using hunter surveys, hunter report cards, and migration chronology have attempted to set the season segments for this zone to appease a wide variety of hunters. Hunters who hunt shallow marshes such as Marais des Cygnes and Neosho wildlife areas may prefer some opportunity to hunt earlier in the fall,

while there are hunters who prefer to hunt as late as possible having access to rivers and water bodies that are open in December and January. Hunters who prefer to hunt the late season are generally targeting mallards. With only a limited number of hunting days provided by the USFWS frameworks, it has been difficult to please everyone, so during this window when the duck hunting zones can be adjusted, KDWPT biologists are seeking hunter input.

Zone changes must be approved by the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission in October to meet the Dec. 1 final deadline for the USFWS. Any changes would be in place for the 2016-2017 seasons and stay in place for five years. In May, KDWPT staff hosted public meetings in locations around the state to hear hunters' opinions, and zone boundaries have been discussed at Commission meetings in March and June. A survey was sent to randomly-selected hunters, and data from that, along with public meeting comments,

will help staff and the Commission make a decision on whether to change the current zone boundaries. The Commission will hear results of the survey and public comment at the August 20 meeting at the Kansas Wetland Education Center in Great Bend.



WHAT AM I?

Answer to be revealed in the September/October issue.



Clue #1

You can find me swimming or crossing a road.

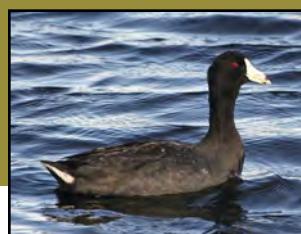
Clue #2

I love to sunbathe.

Clue #3

I have a brightly-colored mark on either side of my head.

**May/June issue answer:
American coot!**



Kansas Game Wardens Recognized for Exemplary Efforts

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) Law Enforcement Division recently presented several game wardens with awards for their outstanding efforts both in and out of the field in 2014. The following officers were recognized for their exemplary efforts:

The Award of Merit was presented to Hal Kaina and Greg Salisbury. Kaina received the award for his investigation work in developing information leading to the arrest of an individual involved in the theft of copper wire from agricultural irrigation systems. Salisbury received the award for his actions relating to a house fire in rural Ottawa County.

Matt Hanvey and Jason Harrold were presented with **The Richard Harrold Memorial Award for Investigations**.

Hanvey and Harrold were recognized for their investigation of a multi-year case involving four individuals from Mississippi. All four violators were charged and arrested on several charges, including multiple counts of taking deer, some classified as trophy animals, without licenses or permits.

The Boating Officer of the Year Award was presented to Kurt Hudson for his efforts in advancing boating safety across the state

by participating in a variety of training and educational programs, special enforcement efforts aimed at reducing impaired operation of watercraft, and going above and beyond to acquire advanced training.

Josh DeHoux was presented with **The Life Saving Award**. DeHoux, who witnessed a vehicle accident on I-35 in the Kansas City area, stopped and helped perform CPR on one of the victims. Although the victim did not survive, DeHoux is recognized for his efforts to save the life of another person.

Jeff Goeckler, Lance Hockett and Jesse Gehrt were also presented with **The Life Saving Award** for their efforts in saving a hunter shot with a 20 gauge shotgun. Through their direct action and working in coordination with local EMS personnel, the victim survived the injury.

The Award of Valor was presented to Owen Johnson. Johnson, while on patrol, was involved in a vehicle accident. Although sustaining serious injuries himself, including a triple fracture to his fifth neck vertebrae, a fractured eye socket, broken nose, three fractured ribs and multiple contusions of the head, Johnson still managed to notify emergency services and rendered aid to the other victims of the

accident until emergency services arrived on the scene.

The Director's Award was presented to Lt. Bob Funke, Brad Hageman, Jeff Cakin, Lynn Koch, Jon Entwhistle, Mike Hopper, Scott Leamon, Ben Womelsdorf and K-9 Libby, and investigator Jason Hawman for their work in the investigation and prosecution of eight individuals who were charged with 48 violations. The charges included four counts of felony commercialization of wildlife as well as charges for the possession of stolen property. Officers from the Department's Public Lands Section, Parks Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Osage County Sheriff's Officer were also involved in the investigation.

Dave Adams was presented with **The Officer of the Year Award**. Adams, who was recently the lead officer in the investigation of eight individuals violating numerous wildlife and criminal laws, was recognized for his dedication to the mission of conservation law enforcement. Apart from his law enforcement duties, Adams is also involved in hunter education, boating safety, and the Archery in the Schools Program.

Two Kansas Hunter Education Instructors Make Hall of Fame

Kansas Hunter Education instructors Ray Fischer and Dennis Vincent were recently inducted into the International Hunter Education Association's (IHEA-USA) Hall of Fame.

Fischer, a veteran instructor of 20 years, received the Volunteer Hunter Education Hall of Fame Award, and Vincent, a veteran instructor of 25 years, received the Professional Hunter Education Hall of Fame Award.

Fischer became involved with the Kansas Hunter Education program in 1995 serving as an instructor. Just two short years later, he was named an area coordinator. To date, he has served in several capacities, including serving on the program's advisory committee for the past seven years.

Vincent, named the 2014 Kansas Hunter Education Instructor of the Year, is also a committed member of the program.

"Dennis is a down-to-earth spokesman for hunting and shooting," Barrett said of Vincent. "He is able to communicate with everyone from the politician in the statehouse, to the hunting veteran with 30 years of field experience, to the apprehensive mother watching her 12-year-old son shoot a shotgun for the first time."

Dennis DeLay named "Champion of Hunter Education"

Dennis DeLay, a 42-year veteran of the Kansas Hunter Education program has been chosen to receive the 2015 International Hunter Education Association (IHEA-USA) Gallery of Guns "Champion of Hunter Education" award.

Playing an active role in Kansas Hunter Education since the first year classes were conducted, DeLay has instructed more than 60 hunter education classes, making an impact in the lives of more than 1,600 students.

One of DeLay's most notable contributions to the program has been his unwavering dedication to the annual Council Grover Outdoor Youth Event. For the past 11 years, DeLay has helped facilitate the event, serving as a range safety officer.

DeLay's "Champion of Hunter Education Award" will compliment nicely his previous awards. In 1980, DeLay's efforts were recognized when he was presented with the Kansas Hunter Education Order of the Buffalo award, and again in 2015 when he was selected as the 2014 KDWPT Region 4 Instructor of the Year.

As a token of appreciation for his contributions, the Gallery of Guns will present DeLay with a Ruger American rifle.

HOW TO BECOME THE Female PACK LEADER

by Nadia Marji, Associate Editor

The decoys are finally set and I come sit ashore. My fingers, numb. I stick one hand in my pocket to warm it up, and the other I lay on my lab, Kota. She's sitting calmly by my side, waiting, just as she always does on our hunts. I look to her eyes, glued to the sky, and pray some ducks come flying in. I could care less if I limit today, I just want to present Kota with at least one bird. The funny thing is, she wants the same for me.

Every good hunting dog has been trained. Yes, some dogs have innate abilities that make training them less of a priority, but they need training nonetheless. Now, if dogs spoke the English language, there would be no need for me to write this article. But since we can't talk our way through training our four-legged hunting partners, we must learn how to communicate and establish clear roles in a way they can understand. If you don't take anything else away from this article, take away this: Dogs need leaders. Period. In the words of Cesar Millan, "Americans are very big about loving the dog first, so when you tell them you have to set rules and limitations, a lot of people believe it's going to hurt their feelings. They're actually looking for you to be the pack leader."

As the co-owner and "assistant" trainer of three duck-hungry hunting labs, and the fiancé of a naturally-gifted and intuitive dog trainer, I have learned a lot about the pack mentality and what it really means to be a pack leader. It requires patience, consistency, trust, and some darn-good obedience training, but above all, it requires leadership.

For women aspiring to train their own hunting retriever and become a pack leader, here are some of the tips and tricks I've learned along the way.

BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION

Just like any great human relationship, a solid relationship with your retriever requires time and effort, and more importantly, a strong foundation.

FIND A GOOD WHISTLE



"THE GIRLS" OF OUR PACK
(ZEKE STOOD THIS ONE OUT)

This begins when your dog is a pup. Building this foundation requires a balancing act of firmness, love, playfulness, and trust. You can't be a superstar in the love and play departments and expect your dog to respond to firmness or trust you when those areas haven't yet been addressed. Once a strong foundation has been forged with your pup, this area should need little to no up-keep. Build a foundation that's lacking in certain areas, and you'll be making "repairs" throughout the years.

Here are some ways you can build a strong foundation with your retriever from the start:

Include pup in your daily errands. Most dogs love a good car ride, especially when that ride includes ear-flapping and nose-sniffing galore through an open window. These outings can be as short or as long you want, but make pup feel like part of your pack.

Introduce pup to as many sights and sounds as you can, especially if it mimics anything to do with hunting. Bang pots and pans in the kitchen to get pup used to loud sounds, take pup to the local park where resident geese have been to sniff out fowl, and make sure pup gets to meet as many different dogs as possible.

Start presenting pup with basic commands he or she can expect to hear the future. For example, when you put pup in the car to go run errands, say "load up" as you place them in the vehicle. Over time, pup will start to make the association, even if it isn't big enough to get in on its own. Now, pups can be deceiving in that sometimes they may appear to actually follow a command after just a few short weeks of being introduced to it. Don't let this fool you. Be consistent, and continue to teach pup the same way you always have, even if it appears they are "fast learners" or are catching on quickly. It's just like a round of antibiotics when you have an infection. You may think you don't need to finish days 5, 6 or 7 because your symptoms have subsided, but there's a reason for those last three days.

CREATE ROUTINE

Just as children need structure, so do retrievers. There should be clear-cut times for play, rest, nutrition, training, and hunting. It's never too early to create a routine with your dog. This teaches them that there is a time and place for everything, you (the pack leader) are in control of what happens and when, and it gives them a better idea of what is expected of them. Regardless of the dog's age, a good, solid routine is especially important for any retriever coming to a new home – it helps establish familiarity in an unfamiliar place.



Here's an example of the daily routine for our retrievers:

6:30 a.m.-

Dogs are released from their kennels, one by one, and by name. After being released, they are given the

THE "SIT"
SIGNAL

command to "go play." Their food bowls from the night

before are taken out of the kennel, and they have free time for one hour. (European starlings have made many buffets of our Purina Pro Plan supply, so taking the dogs' food bowls away during light hours prevents the starlings from gorging on the leftovers.)

7:30 a.m.- Dogs are given the command to "kennel" and are put back in their respective kennels until lunch.

12:30 p.m.- Dogs are released from their kennels, one by one, and by name. After being released, they are given the command to "go play." They have free time for 45 minutes.

1:15 p.m.- Dogs are given the command to "kennel" and are put back in their respective kennels until we come home for the evening.

5:30 p.m.- Dogs are released from their kennels, one by one, and by name. After being released, they are given the command to "go play." They have free time for roughly 30 minutes.

6 p.m.- Training begins. Dogs are taken to the training field and worked, one by one. After training is complete for the evening, dogs are allowed free time once again.

9:30 p.m.- Dogs are given the command to "kennel" and are put back in their respective kennels for the evening. Their food is served.

ESTABLISH (AND MAINTAIN) DOMINANCE

Establishing dominance is a must for every retriever owner, even if you aren't necessarily the "alpha." In our pack, my fiancé is absolutely the alpha. Our dogs respect him, obey him, and understand he is top dog. Although I'm not the alpha, I still have established myself as a pack leader, second in command in the pecking order, to where the dogs will abide by me, as well. If your dogs don't see you as the alpha or a pack leader, it's time to change that. I would consider myself a non-aggressive person by nature, but I don't need my dogs to know that. Here are some ways in which I have established dominance within our pack without feeling like I have to transform into The Hulk to make it happen:

Posturing. By opening up my chest and using what little height I have, I try to stand tall in front of the dogs when giving commands. By doing this,

you'll NEED LOTS
OF BUMPERS



I am reaffirming the fact that I am bigger than them, and therefore, in charge.

Projecting my voice. Now I'll admit, this is an area of mine in need of improvement. My fiancé naturally has a more commanding tone than me, and he is better able to project his voice at greater distances. He can command our retrievers to sit from 100 yards away and the dogs will get their behinds on the ground. I can yell the same command from what seems like 10 yards away and still have a hard time matching his volume. Now, don't get me wrong, I can push out a good, hardy "no" when the time calls

AN E-COLLAR IS ONE OF YOUR MOST VALUABLE TOOLS



for it, but other than that, I often have a need to speak up.

If, like me, you have a less-intimidating voice, consider using hand signals or whistle commands when your vocal chords need a rest. I taught Kota from a young age that when I extend my open palm toward her, it means "sit." The motion looks much like a crossing guard, signaling vehicles to come to a halt. She also knows that one blow of the whistle means the same thing, three blows of the whistle means "here," and so forth. I still get the same results as my fiancé's

vocal commands, but I don't have to fight to sound like a drill sergeant. With that being said, don't fully substitute your hand signals and whistle commands for vocal commands. Your retriever may not always be in a physical position to see you give a visual command, and you may not always have a whistle nearby, but you will always have your voice.

Regularly giving commands. It can be "sit," "here," or even something as simple as "no," but I regularly and consistently give commands to the dogs, especially outside of training time. This doesn't mean the dogs can't relax and have free-for-all's in the backyard, ours do all the time, but it serves as a reminder to them that no matter what they are doing, where they are, or what time of day it is, if the pack leader gives a command, that command is to be obeyed. And ladies, remember there is a difference between telling and asking. We need to be tellers, not askers.

Reprimanding undesirable behavior. Whether I show my disapproval by refraining from praise, shouting "no," kenneling the dog, or swatting them on the behind or snout, my dogs need to know when I don't approve of something. Our youngest male, Zeke, just turned a year old and he used to like to jump up on me whenever I released him from his kennel, as it was an exciting part of the day for him. When he did this, I would shout "no," but it brought about nothing but a small cower from him. The following week when Zeke jumped on me, I shouted "no" and put my knee forward. It certainly kept him from jumping as hard, but still the behavior continued. The week after that, I released him from his kennel as usual. He jumped up, just as I expected, and I shouted "no," swatting him hard once on the snout. He has yet to do it again. He didn't obey my commands at first, but I never let his attempts at trumping my position prevail. By maintaining my dominance, and ultimately finding a way of showing my disapproval that resonated with him, I was able to teach Zeke that particular behavior was unacceptable. Not only was breaking Zeke of jumping part of his obedience training, but it also serves as a safety precaution. When my fiancé and I take Zeke out duck hunting this season and he gets excited, we can't allow him to jump on us with loaded shotguns in our hands, endangering us, other hunters, or our other dogs. As women, we have to remember that it doesn't make us mean dog owners to reprimand our dogs when necessary, it makes us pack leaders.

BUY EQUIPMENT THAT WORKS FOR YOU

Retriever training equipment and tools are not one-size-fits-all, and that's a good thing. Not all trainers go about training the same way, and not all dog owners have the same resources and capabilities. You can shop for as many different retriever training tools as your wallet will allow for, the sky really is the limit here, but in my opinion, there are three basic tools every aspiring female pack leader needs: a good whistle you'll want to use, easy-to-throw bumpers, and an e-collar. (Yes, the thing that shocks your dog. We'll address this in a little bit.)



TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Whistles

Having training equipment you enjoy using makes a world of difference. I recently bought a new purple whistle, and as silly as it sounds, something as small as liking the color more than my old one has made me want to use it more.

When researching whistles, I also chose this particular model because it had greater decibel capabilities than my previous one, ultimately helping me project sound louder and farther.

When buying a whistle, you may want to consider getting one with a rubber mouthpiece. This is not only more comfortable when keeping the whistle in your mouth for extended periods of time, but it also helps give your teeth a little more grip, preventing the whistle from sliding out of your mouth when you need to be hands-free.

Bumpers

When it comes to working on retrieves with your dog, bumpers and dummies are an absolute necessity. We have used canvas, plastic, rubber, and foam bumpers, and not all throw the same for me.

I have a hard time throwing traditional, cylinder-shaped bumpers, but have found that dummies like Dokken Dead Fowl Trainers are a breeze for me to throw. These dummies are shaped like actual waterfowl with the head separated just slightly from the body, mimicking the length and flexibility of most waterfowl's necks. I believe this small gap in the dummy helps me gain better momentum and fluidity in my throw. The downside to me favoring these dummies over traditional bumpers is cost. These dummies are significantly more expensive than canvas or plastic bumpers, and although they work well for me, I also can't afford to stockpile them. Try different bumpers and see what works best for you. You may find you have no problem throwing traditional bumpers, and if so, great. But if you're like me and they're a little tough to throw, dummies like Dokkens may be the way to go.

E-Collars

Now, back to the subject of e-collars. Before you cringe and decide to forgo this whole retrieving training thing altogether because you hate the thought of using an e-collar on your retriever, do some research. You'll find that nearly every dog training equipment supplier, every professional trainer you talk to, and almost every hunter with a dog out in the field will promote the use of e-collars. Why? Because they work. With that being said, if you do your research and are still uncomfortable with the thought of an e-collar, just retrain

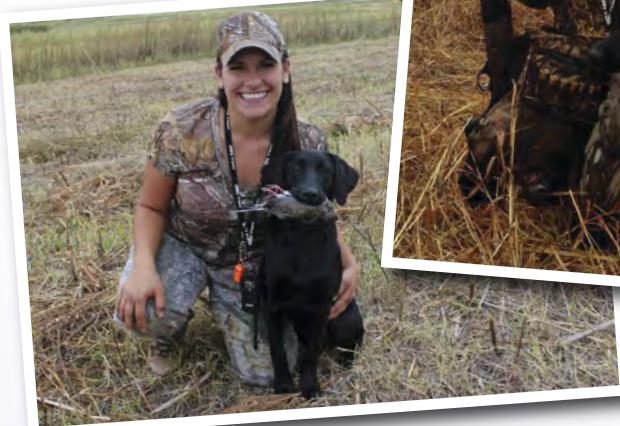
your brain to think of them as "hearing aids" as my good friend refers to them – dogs always seem to listen better with them on.

In all seriousness, e-collars vary greatly in their capabilities, and if you struggle with the thought of "shocking" your dog, consider finding an e-collar with a "vibrate" button and use that instead. For some dogs, just a simple vibration of the collar gets the job done, but you might be surprised to find even the lower settings on an e-collar remote are not as frightening as you might imagine.

Still on the fence? Go to a store that will let you try one out before buying it. You can lay the e-collar on your arm, set it on the lowest setting, and see exactly what your dog will experience firsthand. You'll likely find it's not as scary as you think. If you need one last bit of motivation to use an e-collar, you might be interested to know that some models even come in pink camo, and almost all e-collar suppliers will have a hefty choice of collar colors to choose from. But keep in mind, these are meant to be used as a tool to reinforce behaviors already taught to your retriever. They should not be used as a teaching method, just a reinforcement method.

THIS IS
WHAT IT'S
ALL ABOUT!

FIND A



MENTOR

Whether you would prefer a book, DVD series, videos on YouTube, a local dog trainer, or your regional American Kennel Club (AKC) or Hunting Retriever Club (HRC), find a mentor. This is a great way to learn from someone else's experiences, gauge you and your retriever's performance, and hopefully, learn something new.

My fiancé and I have been fortunate enough to work with our good friend Dennis Cox, owner of 3-

D Retrievers in Isabel, Kansas. His expertise, generosity in sharing his land and equipment, and camaraderie have proved more than beneficial to our dogs, and us as trainers. I recommend finding a professional trainer in your area, but if you can't locate one, or they are short on time (and understandably so), consider checking out an AKC or HRC club.

Most clubs host "training days" where retriever owners of all ages and skill levels can come together and train their dogs. Land and equipment are provided, and almost all of them are held on the weekends. To find an AKC club near you, visit www.akc.org/clubs. To find an HRC club near you, visit www.huntingretrieverclub.org.

Balancing Home and Training

To say that properly training a hunting retriever doesn't require a big time commitment would be a lie, but the good news is that it is doable, even for the busiest of women.

Take Laura McCaw for example. Owner of SageCreek Kennels in Wolfe City, Texas, McCaw handles her kennel's day-to-day operations, participates in dog therapy programs, and she's the mother of three children – a 7-year-old, 4-year-old, and 1-year-old.

Laura and "Sage"

"Don't let the 'kennel' in our name fool you, the kennel is our house," McCaw adds. "We consider all of our dogs a part of our family."

Between litters, gymnastics classes, dog training, making dinner, hunt tests, and vet visits, it's amazing she's able to handle it all, but if there's anyone who is proof making time for it all is possible, she's it.

McCaw credits her success to the support and understanding of her loving husband, Carl. McCaw says

without him, SageCreek wouldn't be what it is today, and she wouldn't be able to pursue her love of dogs and training to the extent that she does.

So how does she do it all? Little by little, and with consistency.



"You don't need hours in a day to get a dog where they need to be, but consistency is key," says McCaw. "I believe just 10 minutes a day can teach a dog so much."

McCaw doesn't train alone though, she has the help of a Bird Boy – an electronic, dummy launcher that is.

"It's one of my favorite tools in training," said McCaw. "It's hard to train by myself as it is, so with the launcher, I can stretch a dog's marks out pretty good, even with a baby on my hip."

If she can work one into her schedule, McCaw also participates in hunt tests.

"Participating in hunt tests has provided me with adventure," said McCaw. "It can be hectic having my kids and dogs with me on the road and traveling to unfamiliar areas, but it's a true blessing that I'm able to do these things. I like to think of them as mini vacations."

McCaw adds that having her children frequently around the dogs

THIS MOM MAKES HUNT TESTS A FAMILY AFFAIR



has actually proved to be more beneficial than anything.

"Having children around has actually been a pleasure, as they are a huge part in adding to the socialization process of our puppies," said McCaw.

For mothers and wives in situations similar to McCaw's looking to compete in hunt tests, she has some advice.

"If you have kids, involve them," says McCaw. "Let them watch the dogs run and teach them the importance of helping you out, and the responsibility that comes along with handling dogs. It is completely normal to feel butterflies or to be nervous; I still am with every dog I run. And if a dog doesn't pass, take that as a learning experience. Just have fun."

Training as a Profession

There are women interested in training their own personal hunting retrievers, women who train retrievers as a hobby, and then there's Julianne Mitchell.



JULI AT AKC'S MASTER NATIONALS

Co-operator of Kanati Kennels out of Brownwood, Texas, Mitchell has 18 years of experience in all-breed obedience training, 10 years of retriever training, and numerous titles at the AKC Master level. She belongs to a rare breed of women who have made a living from retriever training. Equally impressive is the fact the Mitchell does it all alongside her mother, Glenda. With more than 30 years of breeding and obedience training, 16 years of retriever training, and several titles at the HRC Grand level, Glenda has proven to be a true master of the craft, passing on skills that are clearly evident in her daughter.

I was fortunate enough to meet Glenda's daughter while attending a hunt test in Oklahoma. Despite being one of the "pros," and myself being a novice trainer, Mitchell was as down to earth as they come.

Recounting her first hunt test experience, Mitchell shared the following story.

"It wasn't until 2000 that I ran my first hunt test. My mother asked me on Thursday if I would like to travel with her to the Sooner Retriever Club's test and run her dog in the Juniors. I agreed and got a crash course on Friday morning, before we got on the road," said Mitchell. "At the test, Burgundy made her first retrieve and promptly delivered it to my mother, sitting in the gallery. I knew then and there I needed to learn more if I was going to continue this sport."

Since then, Mitchell took it upon herself to learn anything and everything she could, ultimately turning her passion into a career. Today, Mitchell travels from state to state, still competing in hunt

tests, only instead of running her mother's dog, Mitchell is running clients' dogs.

Mitchell attributes several things to her progression in the field, such as a mentorship and research, but she has also found value in women's training seminars.

"I found the most empowering resource to be women's training seminars," said Mitchell. "There are plenty of books and guys out there to learn from, but to go to a seminar and get hands on with other women, enables you to let go of any inhibitions or inadequacies you may feel you have."

Mitchell also has the following recommendations for aspiring female trainers.

"Do your homework, put in the hours, and pick one person or particular style that suits you and follow it," says Mitchell. "Don't let too many people influence you."

JULI HAS MADE A CAREER OF TRAINING

[Fun Fact: The Mitchell's kennel name, Kanati, means "strong hunter" in the Cherokee language. The duo picked the name as a way of paying homage to their Native American ancestry.]

Resources

If you're ready to take the lead and start training your hunting retriever, consider checking out the following resources utilized by our pack. And remember these words from John C. Maxwell – "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."

See you in the field. 🐾



Organization: American Kennel Club, www.akc.org.

Organization: Hunting Retriever Club, www.HuntingRetrieverClub.org.

Book: *Retriever Training for the Duck Hunter*, by Robert Milner.

DVD: "Training a Retriever Puppy with Bill Hillmann."

Store: www.GunDogSupply.com

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MARC MURRELL
MANAGER, GREAT PLAINS
NATURE CENTER, WICHIT

SAND STATE



It was a long time in the making, but one of the coziest – and right now, possibly the most popular – state parks in Kansas opened last season. Off and running this year, Sand Hills State Park, north of Hutchinson, offers unique camping and outdoor opportunities, particularly for those with equestrian interests. It's already been a busy year since the official grand opening last September and park officials are optimistic it will prove to be a destination location with campers from all over Kansas and beyond.

Kansas' 22nd state park is unique in its location within the habitat of the Sand Hills. These areas were formed by sediment from the Rocky Mountains flowing into the Arkansas River and being deposited along the flood

plain. As this sediment dried, prevailing southwest winds created dunes and the stretch of unique Kansas prairie topography known as the Sandhills.

Sand Hills State Park was acquired in 1974. It's comprised of 640 acres donated to the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism by the Kansas State Industrial Reformatory, and 320 acres donated by Hutchinson's Dillon family. In addition, 163 acres were purchased with money from the Federal Land and Water Conservation fund to bring the total acreage of the park to 1,123.

Outdoor opportunities abound at Sand Hills State Park. It's been managed by special permits for upland bird and archery deer hunting for many years. Construction of the

HILLS PARK

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

camping area began in 2006 and was completed last year, providing a total of 64 campsites, 20 of which meet ADA accessibility requirements. Forty-four of the sites are equipped with sewer, water and electricity hook-ups. Twenty sites have electricity and water, and 14 sites have horse corrals nearby.

There are eight trails throughout the park, totalling nearly 15 miles. They meander through wetland, upland and woodland habitats, and in and around plum thicket-dotted sand dunes stretching 10-40 feet in the air.

If you should want to check it out for yourself, a Kansas State Park Passport (vehicle permit) daily vehicle permit is required. Kansas State Park Passports can be purchased from the vehicle owner's county clerk's office for \$15.50

at the time of vehicle registration only and is valid for the registration period of that vehicle. If a Park Passport is not purchased at the time of registration, visitors can obtain an annual vehicle park permit from any state park or regional KDWPT office for \$25.50, valid for a calendar year. Daily vehicle permits can be obtained from camp hosts or self-pay stations at the park. The Kansas State Park Passport and annual vehicle permit are valid for any other state park across Kansas. In addition to a vehicle permit, campers are also required to pay camping fees to stay at Sand Hills State Park. Prices vary depending on site amenities and time of year.

In addition to the unique aesthetics of Sand Hills State Park, visitors can enjoy glimpses of many wildlife

species in and around the park. White-tailed deer, turkeys, quail and many other species of wildlife call Sand Hills State Park home, and all are readily visible, particularly at dawn and dusk during the spring and fall.

A small central pond located at the park will be stocked with Kansas game fish species and provide future angling opportunities for park patrons soon. It will also attract visiting waterfowl and shorebirds, providing birders with a chance to observe some of their favorite feathered friends there, and throughout the diverse habitat found along the hiking trails.

For more information on Sand Hills State Park, check out ksoutdoors.com/State-Parks/Locations/Sand-Hills, or call the Cheney State Park Office at (316) 542-3664. 





THE GOOD WOODS

text and photos by Andra Stefanoni
Pittsburg

Visitors to Max and Eweleen Good's home in southeast Kansas should get an inkling of the relationship the couple has with their 40 acres as soon as Max reveals the reason they chose the paint color.

"It's the exact shade of sage green as the lichen on those trees," Max says as he points his hiking stick toward the almost Ozark-like woods that surround the home.

Lichen was a good choice: Should they have turned to their nearby prairies, which in early June were awash with color; or to their six-acre wetland dotted with primrose and smartweed; or to their backyard pond that provides habitat for colorful waterfowl, fish, reptiles and amphibians; their home would have used every color in an artist's palate.

"We were going for biodiversity," Max said as he stopped on their deck to admire a gray tree frog. "I think we got it."

Max, retired after a career as a photographer, has owned the property since 1974. But the history of human habitation here dates to the late 1800s. A family of settlers who likely came west across the Missouri border in a covered wagon built a house of stone dug one by one from earth that was, at the time, topped by native prairie. A bird, or perhaps the wind, deposited tree seeds nearby. As civilization pushed west, roads were plotted, train tracks built, and fences installed, limiting the one tool that keeps prairies from becoming forests: Fire.

Succession took root, and eventually, about half of the acreage became deep, shaded woods where Dame's rocket and flowering dogwoods now bloom.

Its paths are littered with deer and raccoon tracks and are bordered with woodland plants like wild strawberry, wild petunia and "heal all," a medicinal plant brought from Europe by settlers. Of the 14 oak species in Kansas, nine can be found here, from black jack to chinkapin.

On this particular day, the sound of newly-hatched 17-year periodical cicadas is deafening.

This particular parcel of land is unique in comparison to its immediate surroundings — a monoculture of flat crop land bisected with country roads and

dotted with barns — in that its topography is diverse. After building the house, the pond, and marrying on its dock, Max and Eweleen set about adding even more diversity to the acreage.

They developed prairies, section by section, in an experiment in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to determine the effectiveness and practicality of restoring tallgrass prairie.

"First we burned it, then we lightly disced it, then we set about broadcasting seeds," Max says as he stopped to point out beardtongue, eastern gamagrass, coneflower, milkweed, coreopsis and a compass plant within steps of one another. "We're still trying to add more species. It's a never-ending thing. But now — now it's really starting to get showy."

Although the experiment exceeded expectations, the conclusion was that it was not cost effective and was too labor intensive to restore — better off to conserve and purchase easements on existing prairies.

But they are happy, and proud. After 15 years of growth, their prairies now boast twice the number of plant species — about 200 — of most prairies elsewhere in the state.

Helping that diversity are several shallow depressions the Goods dug. They fill with water and drain again seasonally. A few are no bigger than a car.



A wood duck pair utilizes one of the Woods' many hand-dug wetland areas. Nearby nesting boxes add to the allure of the property, attracting hooded mergansers, as well.

"They're called pothole wetlands," Max says. "Adding these into the prairies gives you plants that like wet feet, plants that won't grow anywhere else." He's referring to sedges and rushes — plants not often found in typical prairies.

In 1995, they worked with the state and federal government to build the first wetland in the Kansas Wetland Reserve Program.

And they installed manmade habitat.

"We have 10 wood duck houses, in which we've had almost 100 percent nesting occupancy and of that, a third are hooded mergansers," Max says. "We put up bluebird boxes, and goose nesting tubs, too."

A few feet from the house, Eweleen has nurtured wild ginger, wood poppies, trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit growing under the shade of cedars and flowering dogwoods — a woodland garden that requires little maintenance and pays big dividends.

They have no cats or dogs by choice, they noted, to prevent threats to wildlife. Instead, they count as neighbors the occasional bobcat that strolls up their lane, the bright yellow prothonotary warbler that darts about the bank of the pond, the five-lined skinks that sun themselves on the dock, and the eastern phoebe that built a nest atop a porch light and raised a couple of clutches there.

They also own no lawn mowers — there is no fescue anywhere on the place. And that means that on Saturday afternoons, when the rest of the world is riding back and forth on their John Deeres, the Goods are where they want to be: Enjoying a cold beverage in a matching pair of adirondack chairs on their shady deck overlooking the pond.



The Good's visitors run the gamut, ranging from bobcats and warblers, to five-lined skinks and this frog.

Combined, they call it all "The Good Woods Wetlands and Wildlife Area." Their purpose, they say, was simply to create a place that could be inhabited by humans while increasing the biodiversity.

"Hopefully since our woods and prairies both sequester carbon, our CO₂ footprint on earth will be

covered by what we have done," says Eweleen, a retired teacher. Having spent decades pouring over student papers, she now pours over field guides that fill shelves in the couple's living room.

For several years, the Goods have invited large groups of friends and acquaintances to "The Good Woods" in an effort to foster awareness about their efforts and the importance of diversity.

"We wanted to provide the opportunity for educ-



Butterfly milkweed dots a path at the Goods' property. Eweleen says the blooms mark the arrival of chiggers for them.

tional experiences in biodiversity. We can't save the planet without educating young people, and others who didn't get it while they were young," Eweleen says.

Such groups have included university professors and students, Boy Scouts, Audubon clubs, church groups, high school classes, and summer campers.

Max delights in taking them slowly along his paths, leading the way like a modern day John Muir and pausing to provide scientific and common names as well as anecdotal information about plants and wildlife.

"That's compass plant, and it's named because its leaves always point north and south," he points out on one recent such tour. "Pretty neat, huh?"

Eweleen often joins in.

"That's a butterfly milkweed," she says to a group admiring a blaze orange mound a stone's throw from the path in a sunny meadow. "When it's blooming, chigger season has started."

The Goods like to ask each group, "Have you covered your carbon footprint during your brief stay on Planet Earth?"

Perhaps, they like to believe, a visit to their property might inspire at least one to do so. Their efforts always draw verbal praise from the visitors. It's also drawn official recognition, but the Goods don't announce that. If visitors, however, venture into the couple's garage, they'll see hanging in a corner a sign bestowed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife,

Parks and Tourism and the Kansas Bankers Association: The Wildlife Habitat Conservation Award.

The Goods also have drawn the praise of visiting scientists. Visiting biologists from the University of Kansas and USFWS have told them they have the most diverse prairie in the state, Max says.

Biology professor Steve Ford, a longtime faculty member at Pittsburg State University, says he believes their entire property to be the most diverse 40 acres in Kansas.

"I would say if there are 40 acres that are more diverse, show it to me. I haven't seen it," Ford says.

For years, Ford has been bringing his wildlife class here as a lesson in how private individuals can positively impact the land they own.

"It's an exemplary example of what a private individual who is interested and motivated can do to attract wildlife and a lot of diversity of wild vegetation," Ford says. "I want to instill in them that it isn't just something that's left to the government. And it's really not hard, if you have a piece of ground no larger than a backyard and a few birdfeeders, all the way up to thousands of acres, to do something."

"Max is not a biologist. He's a photographer. But he's interested in the aesthetics of nature, and has taken

it upon himself to get the beauty and the diversity by putting in time, effort and some money," Ford says.

"He had a nice canvas to start with, but more importantly, he has a passion for it," Ford added. "And the result of that is being surrounded by wildlife and plant life like nowhere else in the state." 



Above: a prickly pear cactus grows on the Goods' property.
Below: Landowner and conservationist, Max Good, regularly gives tours with his wife, Eweleen. The couple has owned the grounds since 1974.



A BOY AND HIS BOAT

**text and photos by Dustin Teasley
*graphic designer, Pratt***

“

Whether it be a farm pond, county lake, or a tiny creek, water is a magnet for kids. Give kids a chance to play in a creek for a day, and they'll come back wide-eyed and muddy. Put a fishing pole in their hands, and you might spark a life-long pursuit. Not all kids will love fishing, but for some, it holds a powerful attraction. My son, Hunter, is one of those kids.

”







Hunter loves to fish and having a boat has always been one of his dreams. He mowed lawns last summer in hopes of saving for one, but when a truck restoration project with his grandfather presented itself, he decided to put the boat dream on hold and put most of his summer savings into the truck. With only \$400 left, Hunter's odds of owning a boat this year were looking dismal. It wasn't until I began shopping for an old pickup to use around the farm that I happened upon a golden opportunity- a packaged deal that included a 1968 three-quarter-ton Chevy pickup with an aluminum boat and trailer. The

truck was in great shape for its age and we settled on a deal that netted us the truck, boat, trailer, and a topper for the truck, too. Hunter paid \$350 for the boat and trailer and I covered the rest. As if the deal wasn't sweet enough, the owner even drove 140 miles to deliver everything.

Upon the truck and boat's arrival, we sat for hours listening to the owner talk about the things he had done with the old pickup, and fishing trips he had in that old boat. It really got us excited.

It was early last fall and the boat and trailer needed some work, so we set our sights on having it ready to fish this spring

At the beginning, we were mostly smiles, knowing the hard work that lay ahead of us would one day pay off in the form of fishing trips and time spent together. Disassembly and assembly were the favorite parts for Hunter. The work in between - not so much.

We started with the trailer, and with winter bearing down on us, we were motivated through the sun-shortened and bitter-cold days. Certain tasks required good planning to take advantage of the occasional warm spells.

or early summer. The deal I made with Hunter was that if he purchased the boat and trailer, I would purchase the life jackets, paddles, trolling motor and battery. Hunter had already purchased an anchor last summer from a local farm auction. First thing Monday morning, I registered Hunter's boat and got his new numbers. Our journey had officially begun.

In order to be ready for fishing season, we needed a plan. We had a 14-foot 1969 Chrysler semi-V bottom aluminum boat, sitting on a 16-foot tilt trailer with 12-inch tires. The transom was usable for a trolling motor, but needed

Working on the fenders seemed like a natural starting place. Hunter seemed excited to work, and disassembly was fun for him. Rust and paint removal on the fenders was taxing but short-lived. He was able to see progress immediately. Once rust removal was done and the metal was cleaned and degreased, priming and painting began. This was his first time using primer and paint, but he eventually got the hang of it.

replaced before we put anything bigger on it. The wood under the aluminum seats was rotted out, and the trailer was in rough shape. The lights worked, but the wiring was in disarray and exposed.

We decided to work from the ground up, getting the trailer in shape first. I purchased an LED marine trailer lighting kit with wiring harness, a standard 2-inch hitch to replace the existing 1 7/8-inch hitch, as well as new tires and rims. We opted for galvanized over painted rims for durability in our marine application. The trailer jack and winch seemed to be in working condition, but I decided to replace that, too, since we were basically building this from the ground up any way.

We pushed the boat off and rolled the trailer into the shop to begin stripping it down. Hunter removed lights, wiring, the trailer bunks, and rollers, and we dropped the axle and fenders from the frame. We took pictures and measurements to assist with reassembly, then detached the tilt tongue and stripped all the attachments.

What had once seemed like a simple refurbishing project was growing in magnitude and cost. To do the job right, I needed to pur-

chase additional equipment, including a sandblaster and a 4-inch angle grinder. Then I bought various sanding discs, wire brushes and sandblasting media for removing rust and old paint.

Hunter did most of the disassembly and getting the fenders cleaned up and primed, but much of the work following that was tedious and time-consuming and he lost interest. I was on my own



Although reassembly took place at the end of the project, Hunter remembered the effort that went into making the fenders look nice.

blasting, sanding, priming and painting while Hunter stuck around for moral support.

Over the next eight weeks, I worked evenings and weekends, knowing spring fishing would be here in a blink. Occasionally, Hunter became discouraged (as most impatient 11-year-olds would have), and I'll admit, the sanding, sandblasting, priming and painting was becoming monotonous. The most time-consuming part of the project was clearing the rust and old paint from the inside nooks and crannies of the channel iron frame, but I knew it needed to be done.

Hunter's enthusiasm for the project grew again when his grandfather came over and showed him how to pack wheel bearings. Once the bearings were packed, we reassembled the axle and attached leaf springs and mounting bars. When I showed Hunter the



Repacking wheel bearings and installation of new bearing buddies and seals will help ensure a longer life for the trailer, and hopefully prevent breakdowns during fishing trips. Hunter enjoyed working in the grease, but it was only four bearings. The final result was quite a change from what we started with. Below, Hunter uses a angle grinder to remove heavy rust on the outside of the channel iron frame.



before and after pictures of just the axle, he was surprised and immediately became even more motivated to continue the trailer restoration.

After many days and many sanding discs, bags of blasting

media, and a case of primer and paint, most of the parts were now ready for complete reassembly.

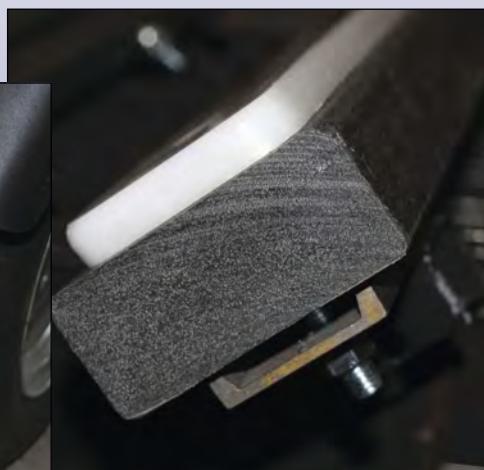
As the project continued to develop, we decided to make a

few improvements to the trailer, including an extended tongue to accommodate later installation of a spare tire and small utility box. We also upgraded the tail light housings for use as a step for easier access into the boat.

We replaced the traditional wooden, carpeted boat bunks and slides with 50 percent recycled post-consumer plastic two-by-four boards, backed with small channel iron for stability. I also purchased boat slicks to attach to the bottom bunks. The cost of the boards, slicks and channel iron was a little over \$250, but I don't plan on ever having to replace them. I also figured the material upgrade would be cheap insurance in preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species, especially zebra mussels.

Hunter seemed to enjoy the reassembly portion of the project; it was rewarding for him to see the big parts come together. He took great pride in the work we had done, especially in the designing of the new tail light housings.

We finished the trailer project and winched the boat onto the trailer for a fitting. After making



Custom tail light brackets gave the trailer a unique look that Hunter was proud of. The composite plastic two-by-four bunks and white vinyl boat slicks should help reduce the risk of transporting aquatic nuisance species such as zebra mussels, and be maintenance free for the life of the trailer.



At left, trailer parts ready for reassembly. Above: True to my word, the trolling motor and battery are ready for the maiden voyage of the "Catfish Hunter"

some roller and bunk adjustments, the boat was ready for new registration decals and numbers. Due to a baseball tournament, we had to anxiously wait until the following Sunday afternoon to set out on our maiden voyage.

When the time finally came, we installed the motor and battery, loaded life jackets and fishing gear aboard, and hit the road. On the way to the boat ramp, I asked Hunter what he wanted to name his boat. After some careful con-

sideration, he said "Catfish Hunter."

"That works for me, bud," I replied, smiling.

We put in on a small ramp on the nearby river. Once we were afloat, Hunter piloted us up the river, grinning from ear to ear, proud as he could be. We stopped a couple of times, dropped anchor and fished for channel catfish over the next hour and a half. We never had a bite, but he was still smiling all the way home.

We still have more plans for the boat, but decided to fish it this season as is. During that time, we'll get a feel for our needs and wants for the second

phase of the boat's restoration next winter, but we are content knowing it's going to travel well to the next fishing hole from here on out. Although we blew the budget, the time spent working on this project with my son was priceless. He also learned skills that will help him with the truck restoration with his grandfather. We accomplished something together, and even though the labor split wasn't quite 50/50, Hunter has something to be proud of and is more likely to take better care of it.

Now, on to new adventures with the "Catfish Hunter!" ⚓



Hunter even set aside his sibling squabbles to take sister Anastin fishing. It was nice to have harmony for a while.



Women in Conservation

by Nadia Marji, Associate Editor

They're helping you enroll your land in the Walk-In Hunting Access (WIHA) program; educating your children on the importance of leaving young wildlife alone; stocking your local public waters with sizeable catches; compiling surveys to figure out your hunting and fishing desires; assisting you with prescribed burns; making sure you have a quality camping experience; they're the women of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) – they're women in conservation.

Here are seven unique women who hold positions at KDWPT that you may not have been aware of; and although their daily duties vary greatly, they each share the same goal of making your hunting, angling, and outdoor recreation experiences the best they can be.

Pat Silovsky- nature center director

"I was only going to spend five years at this job, but I'm still here after 26. I always thought I would leave when I ran out of ways to make it better, but that has never happened, and I still have more ideas."



If you've ever taken a trip to the Milford Nature Center in Junction City, chances are you've seen the handywork of Pat Silovsky. Serving as director of the center, Silovsky devotes her days to providing public programs, grounds and facilities maintenance, updating displays, caring for the center's animals, and assisting in the operation of the wildlife rehabilitation center.

Silovsky says constantly striving to make the nature center a better place is what drives her, but it's teaching others about the amazing animals found in Kansas that really means the most to her.

"I love opening [people's] eyes to the incredible interactions we see in nature," said Silovsky, "and how all

things are connected, and how we are a part of this connection and not separate from it."

For someone who has spent 26 years in the field, most onlookers would assume it's been a lifelong plan of Silovsky's, but the truth is, the veteran nature center director had other plans for her life.

"I wanted to be a mission specialist on the space shuttle," said Silovsky. "I didn't even know interpretation was a field of study."

Silovsky said that all changed when she became a herpetology lab assistant at Pittsburg State University (PSU) while pursuing her Master of Science in biology. Silovsky and a fellow grad student would routinely collect salamanders, frogs, turtles, and snakes, all of which eventually found a home in the PSU Biology Department. A pet boa constrictor was even donated to the department, providing Silovsky the perfect show-and-tell item for other classes. Their love of collecting animals and sharing their finds with others eventually led to the creation of the biology department's Nature Reach program, which is still in existence today. Looking back, it's no surprise that Silovsky ended up in the career path that she did.

Her advice to future directors?

"You need to know a little about everything. You need to be able to fix a toilet, know how to feed a baby bat, change the oil, or write a brochure, as well as be able to identify anything people bring you. Be a jack of all trades," Silovsky said. "You also need to understand that wildlife biology isn't about managing the animals, it is about managing the people. The animals will do just fine without [them]. Make sure you like dealing with people if you get into this field."

Jessica Mounts- district fisheries biologist

"When I'm talking to young children about my career, I tell them 'I make sure that there are places for people to go fishing and fish for people to catch.' People commonly tell me 'You have the coolest job!' and most days, I have to agree."

You can often find Jessica Mounts sporting a wide-brimmed hat, ample of amounts of sunscreen, and a fish in-hand. She's KDWPT's only female district fisheries biologist and a happy one at that. Why? It's simple. This girl loves fish.

"I grew up camping, fishing (dissecting the bait), and studying the tiny organisms living in puddles in our back yard," said Mounts. "My parents sent me outside to play a lot, and were very tolerant of me getting dirty, climbing trees and bringing various cups of puddle

water into the house to examine. They fed my curiosity and encouraged me to explore."

Today, the same enthusiasm can still be seen in Mounts, only she has traded backyard puddles for bodies of water in Sedgwick, Harvey, Reno, Kingman and Harper counties.

"I love the amount of variety and the integration of science and people, and that there's never an opportunity to get bored," said Mounts. "Science is always changing, fish are always eating, reproducing and growing, and people are the wild card that makes it even more fun."

A true biologist, Mounts relies heavily on the use of her knowledge in biology, ecology, sociology, math and other areas, but those aren't the only means by which she measures "success" when managing fisheries for public fishing.

"I also like to think of my job as giving people an opportunity for the pursuit of happiness," said Mounts. "There is a certain amount of joy that comes to every person when they catch a fish, and that joy only grows later that night when they prepare and eat that same fish for supper. Seeing that connection happen, and being a part of that process is something I am thankful for every day."

Although Mounts' title as a district fisheries biologist is nowhere near a new position for KDWPT, she still regularly encounters people who are unaware of what her job really entails. Mounts often has to explain that, no, her job does not allow her to go fishing all day, and no, she doesn't make all the rules for fishing in Kansas.

Never dismayed by these comments, Mounts instead uses these opportunities to educate anglers about her role and how others can help. Mounts believes a vital part of her job is not only making sure our natural resources are enjoyed, but also that people understand



our connection to these natural resources.

"Every project I'm involved with comes down to that," said Mounts. "People are a part of the earth's ecology, and we play such an important role in preserving it for the future. The walleye doesn't know how

many shad it consumes, it only knows that it is hungry; and so it eats. People, however, are in the unique position to be and feel responsible for our role in the ecosystem."

When she's not sampling local fish populations, stocking ponds, or sharing her knowledge of Kansas fisheries' with others, Mounts can be found enjoying the outdoors with her family.

An avid kayaker, Mounts enjoys the challenge of exploring rivers. She also enjoys taking time to forage for morel mushrooms, backpack and hike, camp, and hunt with her family.

Mounts' advice for those seeking a position similar to hers is simple: walk through every door you're able to, and thank the people who opened it for you. Every experience counts.

Vickie Cikanek- private lands bio-tech

"It may seem like KDWPT and other state wildlife agencies are a 'man's world' because there are mostly men that are hired, but in my experience I have never been looked at any differently than the guys. I think it is mostly men hired because they are the majority that are applying."

If someone were to tell you they worked as a private lands bio-tech for a living, chances are it's a title you've never heard of. It was a title that even the woman holding wasn't aware of at one point, but the job fits her like a glove. Vickie Cikanek is one of KDWPT's few biology technicians. Her office duties don't include much "office" time at all and that's



the way she likes it.

Cikanek's job duties include overseeing the agency's WIHA contracts for Russell, Ellsworth, Lincoln, Saline, and Ottawa counties; promoting farm bill practices; giving youth education programs; providing landowners with wildlife habitat enhancement advice; conducting wildlife population surveys; assisting with wildlife damage control; and more.

Had it not been for the encouragement of a college

friend, Cikanek's "office" may have looked a little different today.

"I originally started college thinking I was going to be a veterinarian," said Cikanek. "A friend in college convinced me to change my major to wildlife biology. She said it could get me into veterinary school if I still wanted to, but the classes were way more exciting because they had a lot of hands on labs that involved going outdoors and sampling wildlife and identifying various critters. She was right." Cikanek added that she enjoyed her wildlife classes so much that she decided veterinary school was not for her and wildlife management was her new career path.

Always a fan of the outdoors, Cikanek spent much of her time as a young child learning about wildlife. It wasn't uncommon for her to pick up young animals, frogs, turtles and bugs.

"My mom has always instilled in me a compassion for all living creatures and a love for being outdoors and enjoying the sunlight," explained Cikanek. "She never really wanted me sitting around the house doing nothing, so she sent me to camps during the summer, most of which were outdoor camps and kept me busy during the weekends."

And keeping busy is still a practice of Cikanek's today. Apart from serving as a private lands bio-tech, Cikanek is also a Kansas Hunter Education instructor and dedicated hunter.

For the past 10 years, Cikanek has enjoyed hunting pheasants and dove with her husband and his family. Although she enjoys getting out and watching the dogs work in the fall, her favorite hunting season comes earlier in the year.

"I have really grown to love turkey hunting," said Cikanek. "I can't get enough of watching turkeys strutting around, fighting and gobbling. They are very entertaining even if they don't come close enough to get a shot."

Through her work and by example, Cikanek hopes to inspire youth to enjoy these same activities. Her regular involvement with youth events hosted by local Pheasants Forever and National Wildlife Turkey Federation chapters has played a huge part in making that goal possible.

It may be a hectic job at times, and setbacks are present, but Cikanek wouldn't trade her job for anything.

"There are some things, physically, that I cannot do that some men can, but I know my limits and I don't have any issues asking for help when I need it," Cikanek stated.

"One helpful tip I would suggest to anyone interested in wildlife management and conservation is put yourself out there. Don't just settle for a landscaping job or a grocery store job until something in your field opens up. Field experience is the key."

Kimberly Jones- park manager

"I always wanted this, since about age 10. I met a park ranger named Molly at Mesa Verde National Park and wanted to be just like her. I had some distractions along the way, but made a full circle to my childhood dream."

Kansas is home to 26 state parks, two of which are managed by Kimberly Jones. Overseeing a staff of four full time and 13 seasonal employees, five AmeriCorps members, and another dozen volunteers, Jones is required to be many things to many people. Apart from her supervisory duties, Jones is also responsible for the combined 2,300 acres of parks land, 6,000 acres of waters, and 250 campsites that make up Cross Timbers and Fall River state parks. Her duties might seem daunting to some, but Jones is living her dream.

"I always wanted this, since about age 10," said Jones. "I met a park ranger named Molly at Mesa Verde National Park and wanted to be just like her."



Determined to follow in Molly's footsteps, Jones gained the experience necessary by working as a KDWPT fisheries intern. She then served as a seasonal naturalist, followed by the full-time position of park ranger. It was here that Jones made the leap to park manager and she's never looked back.

Glancing at Jones' childhood, it's easy to see where her love of state parks stemmed.

"My brothers and I were lucky enough to have parents that took us camping and traveling a lot; they loved being outdoors," explained Jones. "My parents always tried to go to as many national and state parks as we could on our trips, and it's those experiences that instilled in me a passion to preserve these special places for our future generations."

Jones continues to embrace her parents' love of the outdoors by sharing the same traditions with park goers and especially her own family, while adding a few of her own.

"My entire family enjoys hunting and fishing, and both of my kids have taken deer since they were six," said Jones. "My 9 year old daughter killed a 10-point buck last fall during youth season." Jones added her

family also enjoys hiking, and they plan to hike the Ozark Highlands trail next summer.

When she's not blazing trails, Jones can be found at Cross Timbers or Fall River, doing what she does best – managing resources. And although it's her dream job, Jones admits her job can get tough.

"It can be difficult sometimes keeping staff smiling and positive everyday, especially when budgets have made things stressful in our everyday tasks," said Jones, "but when you put that aside, we do have one of the coolest jobs."

A life-long lover of parks, Jones is able to draw from her cache of wonderful childhood memories at parks as fuel for trekking forward and keeping things in perspective.

"We come to work not for money, but for the conservation of our special places, and within that, we are educating people and giving them awesome experiences in our parks," Jones said. "With these experiences and memories, we hope they will come back, but also want to protect our special places and share new experiences in the future."

Jones' advice to anyone looking to work for a national or state park is this: "Do the volunteer, seasonal, and sometimes less desirable jobs first. Don't be afraid to get dirty and learn everything from the ground up. And lastly, don't waiver on doing what's right."

Kristin Kloft- public service manager III

"Working in the public arena can be very difficult at times, especially when people think that I can control Mother Nature. We are making really positive changes in both habitat work and improved public access."

Previously serving as a the public lands bio-tech for Milford Wildlife Area, Kristin Kloft has a deep connection with the area where she now serves as public service manager III. A KDWPT employee of 10 years, Kloft is responsible for the reclaiming and maintaining of desirable wildlife habitat on Milford Wildlife Area, Geary State Fishing Lake and Washington State Fishing Lake. She also must see that there is safe and

sanitary public access to these areas, as well.

After 10 years in any job, monotony can become an issue, but when it comes to Kloft, she chooses to think otherwise.

"There are virtually endless possibilities for habitat work on Milford, given the diversity of habitat types," said Kloft. "And I enjoy experimenting with different practices."

Kloft's enthusiasm for the practices being put into place aren't always matched by the public, but Kloft understands it's just part of the job.

When she's not doing habitat work, or explaining different practices to area visitors, Kloft enjoys being outdoors with her family, especially when hunting.

"I enjoy many types of hunting: archery for deer, dove, turkey and waterfowl," explained Kloft. "Fishing is also fun, and I'm one of those people who is excited to catch any fish regardless of size or species."

Perhaps Kloft's love of hunting and fishing stems from the fact that she didn't always have the opportunity to participate while growing up on a farm.

"As with most farmers, there just wasn't enough time in the day to get all the work done. My parents would take my siblings and I fishing at a friend's pond occasionally, but I wasn't really exposed to hunting until college," said Kloft.

Since her introduction in college, Kloft has had some memorable hunts, including one for elk. It's these experiences that motivate Kloft to provide the best opportunities on her land, as well.

For those wanting to take on a career similar to Kloft's, she has some advice.

"Get as much experience in as many different areas as possible. Get your hands dirty, literally, and learn as many skills as you can," urged Kloft. Lastly, she added, "Don't let people intimidate you, but always treat people with respect."

Megan Smith- wildlife bio-tech

"From a young age, I knew I wanted to do something in the outdoors. I enjoy seeing all types of wildlife and knowing that I can make a difference in creating better habitat for them."

Growing up in Herkimer, Kansas, Megan Smith always had an appreciation for the outdoors. Thanks to a father who introduced her to hunting and fishing at a young age, Smith still enjoys those activities today.

A graduate of Kansas State University, Smith earned her Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife biology – an education that has served her well in her current position. Smith works as a wildlife bio-tech in the Blue Rapids area, a job she said, not many people are aware of.

"People always ask me 'how did you get into that career?'" said Smith. "Or, they're surprised that I'm not a game warden." Smith believes the confusion exists because a wildlife biologist is not that common of a job.

Working with private landowners, one of Smith's largest responsibilities is growing the WIHA program, a task she admits can sometimes be an uphill battle when competing with outfitting businesses. Although it proves challenging getting new landowners to sign up, Smith said the landowners who do sign up make it all worth it.

"I love educating and assisting private landowners restore wildlife habitat on their property," Smith said. "It's probably what interests me most in my job."

Apart from her WIHA efforts, Smith also works closely with the local Public Lands and Fisheries biologists, conducts wildlife monitoring programs, handles animal damage complaints, and informs the public of outdoor recreational opportunities in the area.

A hunter and angler herself, Smith understands the desires of the agency's constituents.



"I hunt and fish with my husband, who got me into bowhunting and bowfishing, my two new favorite activities," Smith said. "[They're] challenging and fun at the same time."

Smith's advice for the next wildlife bio tech?

"Do seasonal work in the summer during college," said Smith. "And try and get different

jobs working with different agencies. It will help you get a better idea of what you want to do and where you would like to work."

Susan Steffen- human dimensions specialist

"As biologists, we have studied fish and know quite well how to manage a fishery. However when it comes to people, sometimes we miss the mark. My job is to help make the connection between our anglers and resource management."

If you don't know what a human dimensions specialist is, Susan Steffen is the person to talk to. Steffen, an employee of KDWPT for the past five years, serves as the agency's human dimensions specialist in fisheries research.

"I am responsible for measuring the human aspect of our fisheries," said Steffen. "That may sound strange, but we need to know what anglers want, don't want, their attitudes, opinions, and motivations. My job is to help make the connection between our anglers and

resource management."

Steffen also serves as the statewide creel survey coordinator.

"I enjoy the applied aspect of my job, meaning that some of the information I find is then used to inform or improve management or even redirect resources," Steffen said. "It makes me feel like what I do positively impacts the resource."

Although Steffen's duties rely heavily on data and statistical analysis, don't think hiding behind a computer is the only place you'll find this woman. Helping collect sauger milt for the agency's artificial saugeye



spawning program, electrofishing, and providing educational programs are just a few of the other arenas where Steffen is hands-on.

Steffen graduated with her Master of Science in wildlife and fisheries with a concentration in human dimensions, and a minor in sociology from Texas A&M University at Galveston. With a father who works as an internet security engineer, and a mother who works as a social worker, Steffen sees herself as a "hybrid" of both of her parents.

A data management whiz during the week, and a hunter and angler on the weekends, Steffen not only cares about, but also enjoys experiencing the very resources she hopes to improve.

"I hunt turkey, dove, pheasants, prairie chickens, quail, and waterfowl," said Steffen. "I recently started kayak fishing, too, and love to catch redear sunfish."

Her advice to up-and-coming human dimensions specialists? It's not what you'd expect to hear.

"While education is important, I would encourage anyone entering fish and wildlife management to become anglers and hunters, if they are not already," said Steffen. "This connects you to the resource in a way that allows you to have some expert and practical knowledge." 

For more information on careers with KDWPT, call (620) 672-5911 or go to www.ksoutdoors.com.

2015 Sportsmen's Calendar

FALL TURKEY:

- **Season:** Oct. 1-Dec. 1, 2015 AND Dec. 14, 2015-Jan. 31, 2016

DEER:

- **Youth/Persons with disabilities:** Sept. 5-13, 2015
- **Archery:** Sept. 14-Dec. 31, 2015
- **Muzzleloader:** Sept. 14-27, 2015
- **Regular Firearm:** Dec. 2-13, 2015
- **Pre-rut whitetail antlerless:** Oct. 10-11, 2015
- **Firearm Extended Whitetail Antlerless Season:**
Jan. 1-3, 2016 (Units 6, 8, 9, 10, 16, and 17)
Jan. 1-10, 2016 (Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 14)
Jan. 1-17, 2016 (Units 10a, 15 and 19)
- **Archery Extended Whitetail Antlerless Season:**
Jan. 18-31, 2016 (Unit 19 only)

ANTELOPE

Firearm and muzzleloader application deadline: June 12, 2015 (residents only)

- **Archery:** Sept. 19-27 AND Oct. 10-31, 2015
- **Muzzleloader:** Sept. 28-Oct. 5, 2015
- **Firearm:** Oct 2-5, 2015

ELK (residents only)

Application deadline for Ft. Riley July 10, 2015

Outside Fort Riley:

- **Muzzleloader:** Sept. 1-30, 2015
- **Archery:** Sept. 14-Dec. 31, 2015
- **Firearm:** Dec. 2-13, 2015 and Jan. 1-March 15, 2016

On Fort Riley:

- **Muzzleloader and Archery:** Sept. 1-30, 2015
- **Firearm Season for Holders of Any-Elk Permits:** Oct. 1-Dec. 31, 2015

Antlerless Only:

- **Firearm First Segment:** Oct. 1-30, 2015
- **Firearm Second Segment:** Nov. 1-30, 2015
- **Firearm Third Segment:** Dec. 1-31, 2015

DOVE

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

- **Season:** Sept. 1-Oct. 31 and Nov. 7-15, 2015

EXOTIC DOVE

(Eurasian collared and ringed turtle doves only)

- **Season:** Nov. 20, 2015-Feb. 28, 2016

RAIL (Sora and Virginia)

- **Season:** Sept. 1-Nov. 9, 2015

SNIPE

- **Season:** Sept. 1-Dec. 16, 2015

WOODCOCK

- **Season:** Oct. 17-Nov. 30, 2015

SANDHILL CRANE

- **Season:** Nov. 11, 2015-Jan. 7, 2016

GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN

- **Early Season (Greater Prairie Chicken Unit):**
Sept. 15-Oct. 15, 2015
- **Regular Season (Greater Prairie Chicken Unit):**
Nov. 21, 2015-Jan. 31, 2016
- (No open season for taking prairie chickens in Southwest Unit)

PHEASANTS

- **Season:** Nov. 14, 2015-Jan. 31, 2016
- **Youth Season:** Nov. 7-8, 2015

QUAIL

- **Season:** Nov. 14, 2015-Jan. 31, 2016
- **Youth Season:** Nov. 7-8, 2015

SQUIRREL

- **Season:** June 1, 2015-Feb. 28, 2016

RABBITS (cottontail & jackrabbit)

- **Season:** All year

CROW

- **Season:** Nov. 10, 2015-March 10, 2016

TRAPPING/HUNTING

- **Season:** Nov. 18, 2015-Feb. 15, 2016
Badger, bobcat, mink, muskrat, opossum, raccoon,
swift fox, red fox, gray fox, striped skunk, weasel.

BEAVER AND OTTER TRAPPING

- **Season:** Nov. 18, 2015-March 31, 2016

RUNNING

- **Season:** March 1-Nov. 8, 2015

FLOATLINE FISHING

- **Season:** July 15-Sept. 15, 2015

HANDFISHING

- **Season:** June 15-Aug. 31, 2015

BULLFROG

- **Season:** July 1-Oct. 31, 2015

www.ksoutdoors.com

Species Profile: Bullfrog

Bullfrogs are most active from March through October and can be found throughout the state. The largest frog species in Kansas, bullfrogs have been known to grow up to eight inches long, tail to nose and weigh more than a pound.

With large, circular ear membranes just behind the eyes and bright green color, bullfrogs are easy to identify. On warm summer nights, males can often be located by their trademark bellowing call, a sure sign and sound of summer.

During breeding season, female bullfrogs will lay up to 48,000 eggs in masses that can span one to two-and-one-half square feet. Eggs hatch less than a week later, and tadpoles will spend 3-14 months in the water before metamorphosis.

Being opportunistic predators, bullfrogs will eat nearly anything they can fit in their mouths. Common prey include insects, spiders, earthworms, smaller frogs, fish, lizards, mice, snakes, and even small birds.





Backlash

by Mike Miller

DOGS AND FISHING

"Dogs are not really good at fishing, but they understand why it's important."

Datus Proper, *Field & Stream*

I've always loved that quote, as well as the imagery that comes to mind when I read it. Last summer, I wrote about losing my old Lab, Creede, and how much he seemed to enjoy trout fishing in Colorado. Truthfully, Creede was happy to be included in whatever Lisa and I were doing. He did seem to enjoy fishing, always wading out to "help land" a trout after it was hooked, despite my pleas for him to stay on the shore.

However, I had a dog when I was in my teens that truly loved to fish. Sam was half Lab and half Brittany and he looked like a yellow Lab with a docked tail. He loved to hunt, but I always thought he enjoyed being part of our fishing trips more. He usually accompanied my buddies and I when we fished the Greenleaf Pond south of town.

I had "trained" him with a quail wing and fishing pole, thinking that because he was half Brittany, he should point. And point he did. When he was a puppy, I would show off his pointing skills to anyone who would watch, waving the pole and wing around until he froze. Every once in a while, he would humor me and actually lift one of his front feet in true pointing-dog style.

Sam was duly excited on his first fishing trip, and seeing the fishing pole was his cue. He watched the lure intensely as I cast, then kept his eyes focused on the water as I retrieved the lure. Next cast, same thing. I wondered if it was just because of the wing training, and it

may have been, but all that went out the window when I hooked a fish. As soon as Sam saw the bass break the surface, he was in the water after it. I yelled "stay" and "get back," but it did no good. He really thought it was his job to retrieve a fish once I got it near the shore. I don't think I ever lost a fish because of Sam, but he wasn't much help landing them, either.

After that first trip, Sam decided that he needed to stand with front legs in the water, and he watched cast after cast, never tiring. He loved fishing.

He'd go along when we fished for catfish in the creek, but stillfishing didn't hold his attention the way casting a lure did. He'd sit quietly for a while, but if I didn't get bite soon, he would wander around, never getting too far away, just in case. There was one catfishing trip, though, I will never forget.

It was a hot July day, and I was mid-way through my channel catfish phase. After catching plenty of bullheads at the county lake and from the creek in my young fishing career, I was ready to graduate to channel catfish, which I found more difficult to catch. One of the first hurdles was to find a bait that bullheads wouldn't find and eat first. This meant no more worms. I tried shrimp, chicken livers, shad sides, and beef livers.

By accident, I turned a container of beef liver into dynamite channel catfish bait – I left it in the garage for three hot summer days. When I found it while getting my gear ready for a trip to the creek, I noticed a green tinge in the bloody liquid surrounding the liver and could smell the aroma even with the lid sealed tightly. "This has to catch

channel cats," I said.

At the creek, Sam was all business as my cousin, Scott, and I readied our rods. I breathed through my mouth as I cut a chunk of greenish-red liver off a larger piece and put it on my hook. I left the lid off the container and moved a safe distance away from the odor to cast the bait into the slow moving water. I propped the rod on a forked stick and waited, not noticing that Sam had already grown bored and wandered off.

As I watched my line, I thought I heard water gurgling. Then I realized I was hearing lapping noises – a dog drinking. I turned and saw Sam finishing up the rancid juice in the liver container. Sam looked up with an expression that said "tasty!" I knew that dog loved foul odors because he never passed up an opportunity to roll in some long-dead animal, but the liver juice was almost too much.

I thought of Sam recently while fishing Milford Lake. A gentleman camped near the shore was exercising a pair of beautiful bird dogs that looked like German shorthairs, though they were black and white rather than liver and white. He explained that they were Deutsch Kurzhaars, just 11 months old, and they were romping in the grass with puppy exuberance. However, when we began casting, they became all business, standing next to one of us and watching our rods, quivering with intensity. When one of us hooked a fish, both dogs rushed over expecting to help with the landing. Like Sam and Creede, they weren't much help. Fishing was obviously important to them, but they just weren't any good at it.

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