

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks Magazine

FOR HUNTERS, ANGLERS AND OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS | \$2.75 | JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2017



2017 Photo Issue | Textures of Kansas



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KANSAS
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THE surging and ebbing of uncut wheat in the wind, a scissor-tailed flycatcher perched on a barbed-wire fence, lavender-blue skies dotted with cotton-white clouds. These are just a few of the sights of Kansas outdoors.

Kansas outdoors sounds like the clapping of a rooster pheasant's wings mid-flush. The bellowing of a bull frog, and the soft rumble of a truck driving down a gravel road. It's the sound of fish splashing and biting at the surface of a farm pond, just as the songbirds say "time to wake."

The smoky, ashen wind of prairie grasses ablaze during a spring burn.

The flowery fragrance of sandhill plum blossoms in June. The dank, earthy scent of marsh mud as it envelopes your wader boots. This is what Kansas outdoors smells like.

So what does Kansas outdoors feel like? It can feel like the coarse hair of a swift fox in winter, the gritty ridges of old bark as you hang a treestand. It feels like the glassy sides of a freshly-caught crappie, and the downy feathers of a northern shoveler, preening.

I could go on trying to capture what Kansas feels like, but instead, I'll pause here and use this issue to show you.

Enjoy the textures of Kansas.

Nadia Reimer | *Managing Editor*

Contents

FRONT COVER A barred owl perches amid a host of thorny branches. Michael Hoag photo.

INSIDE FRONT COVER Wet, sodden leaves cover the ground. Can you spot the Asian beetle? Jay Miller photo.

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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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KANSAS *View*

with Robin Jennison



iSportsman Is Worth The Trouble

I received a very nice letter last month from a gentleman who was frustrated when he learned that the iSportsman Daily Hunt Permit was required at Perry Wildlife Area. iSportsman is a service that allows hunters to electronically check in and out on wildlife areas that require Daily Hunt Permits. Hunters check in and out using a landline telephone, cell phone, computer or smartphone. Historically, the Daily Hunt Permits were paper permits that hunters picked up at kiosks and filled out before and after hunting. The information is used to guide management efforts and policies. iSportsman replaces the paper permit system, which was labor intensive for area managers and inconvenient for hunters.

This veteran hunter had been hunting Perry Wildlife Area for many years and was unhappy with the iSportsman requirement because several in his group of “older” hunters didn’t carry smart phones or have laptop computers at home. He thought it was inconvenient to be required to check in and out when hunting these areas. I can definitely relate to this gentleman. While I’ve kept up with communication technology because of how we do business, change can occur so fast, it can be like running in sand.

Our Public Lands staff are also sensitive to this, and that is why the iSportsman system is designed to accommodate those with all levels of computer skills. Hunters who don’t have a computer or smart phone can call the agency’s Pratt office and staff will be happy to help them register. Once that is done and they have a user name and pin number, hunters can check in from their landline after 8 p.m. the night before a hunting trip, or the morning of. Check out can be done from the landline at home after the hunt. It only takes a minute or two, but the information provided is extremely valuable.

I support these surveys because I see how hard our Public Lands staff work to improve not only the habitat on their areas, but also the quality of hunters’ experiences. Without survey data, managers can only make decisions based on casual conversations or their own experiences and perceptions. With data gathered through Daily Hunt Permits, we’ve learned how inaccurate some of those perceptions

were. A good example was relayed to me recently when an area manager described how he thought he knew about how many turkeys were taken off his area during the spring season. With Daily Hunt Permit data, he was shocked to learn the actual number was much higher. Information like that can dramatically influence the area’s management plan.

We’ve required Daily Hunt Permits for years on our waterfowl management areas. Managers have used information gathered to better understand hunting pressure, overall harvest, chronological harvest and hunter preference. Daily Hunt Permit data, over time, can indicate which management practices provide desired results. And the more data you have, the more useful it is because trends become evident. And this information helps biologists make recommendations for waterfowl season dates within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s guidelines. Years of survey data can indicate when waterfowl numbers typically peak and when hunter success is highest and when hunters prefer to hunt.

Converting to iSportsman made sense because of the staff time required with paper cards. Managers had to collect cards at least once a week, and on areas such as Cheyenne Bottoms, that could entail 100 miles of driving. Then there were the hours spent inputting the information while struggling to read cards that had been wet, wadded up in a pocket and filled out with a pencil in pouring rain. And data collected with paper cards wasn’t available for at least six months. Data through iSportsman can be utilized immediately.

We hunters tend to remember the highlights and low points. Surveys provide us with baselines, averages, and detailed information about the good years and bad. If I have a couple of good duck hunting trips at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area in 2016, I might remember 2016 as one of the better duck seasons. However, data provided by iSportsman Daily Hunt Permits will tell us how 2016 compared to 2015 or 2014. Survey data is the lifeblood of many of our management programs. Biologists and land managers have a favorite saying, “You can’t manage what you don’t measure.”

iSportsman is just one of the variety of surveys staff use to help manage our wildlife, public areas, the habitat and the Kansans who enjoy these resources. Most of the surveys require the cooperation of hunters and anglers, and we’ve been fortunate that Kansans are willing to help.

Mail and email surveys help biologists estimate annual harvests of upland birds, small game, turkey, deer and waterfowl. We survey hunters, anglers, landowners, and nonhunters to understand participation trends and attitudes about wildlife and our management programs. While the survey methods and public’s opinion are ever-changing, the one constant is our staff’s desire to maintain healthy wildlife and fish resources while providing the best hunting and fishing experiences possible. Surveys, such as the iSportsman Daily Hunt Permit, help them do that. 



Backlash

with Mike Miller

Farewell To Dr. Fox

On Dec. 16, 2016, Lloyd Fox retired from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism after a 37-year wildlife biology career. If you have any interest in Kansas deer, you've probably heard of Fox. You might have read his quotes in newspaper articles, listened to him make deer regulation recommendations to the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission, or maybe you corresponded with him through mail, email or telephone.

Fox has been in charge of our deer management program for nearly half of his wildlife career and if you hunt deer, you know the Kansas herd is the envy of the Midwest. Under his watch, deer hunting in Kansas evolved from good to great, providing ever-increasing opportunities while the population remained healthy and robust.

Fox will be first to tell you about the vision of our first deer biologists, Bill Peabody and Lee Queal, when they developed the management program and hunting regulations for our first modern deer season in 1965. He credits one-time deer biologist Keith Sexson, now Assistant Secretary of Operations, with carrying on that vision and building a healthy deer herd and hunting tradition that emphasized doe harvest for management and allowed bucks to grow old enough to sport trophy-class antlers.

You might say Fox's tenure covered the glory days of Kansas deer. Deer numbers increased dramatically and hunting opportunities expanded during the 2000s. The Kansas landscape's mix of agriculture, native prairie, scattered timber and Conservation Reserve Program grasslands turned out to be near perfect white-tailed deer habitat. However, as the deer population grew, conflicts arose. Fox dealt with growing crop damage issues and when speed limits increased and the number of annual deer/vehicle accidents hit 10,000, Kansas drivers reached their limit.

In just a few short years, deer management went from a page-two story to a front-page, contentious and polarizing issue. The debate was no longer about how we could increase our deer population, but rather how we could reduce it. Discussion about deer and deer management evoked emotion. Hunters were passionate about deer hunting, some landowners resented deer because of the damage they caused, nonhunters loved seeing deer - until they hit one with their car. Fox weathered the storm, maintaining a professional, scientific presence, while amassing information about deer, deer hunting and deer hunters in Kansas. He became adept at dealing with an audi-



ence that was divided and sometimes confrontational.

In my more than 30 years in this business, the time I spent working with Fox and attending public deer meetings with him taught me more about being a wildlife professional than all my other experiences combined. No matter how he was challenged, Fox remained calm and amiable. He presented facts and he never took exchanges personally. I never saw him allow his own biases cloud his decision-making. He continually surveyed stakeholders, and he sought and considered input from everyone.

In my experience with him, Fox was a true professional scientist, but he always had compassion for wildlife and the people who value it. No one has

been more dedicated to the resource and stakeholders or worked harder in this field - no one. A prominent trademark of Fox's tenure can be described with one word: opportunity. Under his watch, deer hunting opportunities in Kansas reached a level we never imagined 50, or even just 20 years ago. Kansas has evolved into one of the top white-tail hunting destination states in the nation.

Pretty amazing for a transplanted New Yorker. Yep, Fox grew up in New York. After listening to him recite statistics and survey numbers from memory or describe wildlife management philosophies, you might assume Fox was a brainy city-boy from back east. You would be mostly wrong. Although he is brainy and was born in New York, he's never been to New York City. He grew up a country boy, hunting, fishing and trapping in New York's Finger Lakes Region, where he walked out his back door with a bluetick Beagle or Foxhound in tow to hunt rabbits, pheasants and grouse. Fox still loves to hunt and fish and looks forward to doing more of both while training his new yellow Lab puppy, Yuki, this season.

Fox's absence will leave a massive void in this department and in the field of wildlife management. On that December Friday, Lloyd Fox walked out of the Emporia Research and Survey Office, taking with him a body of scientific and institutional knowledge that won't easily be replaced. I've joked that we need to install a USB port to his brain so we can download the data he doesn't have on his computer's hard drive, but that might be where he ceases to be amiable.

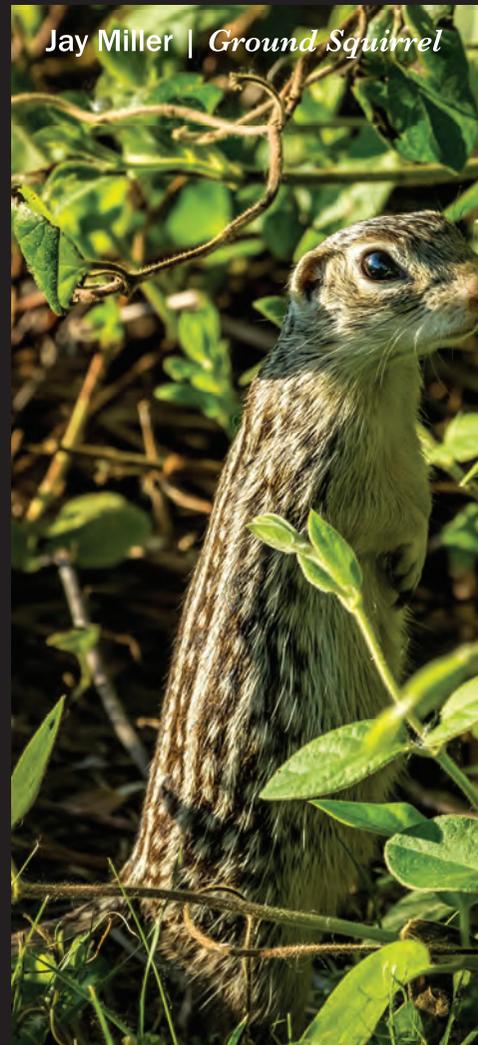
So long my friend. Your colleagues, Kansas wildlife and everyone who appreciates our wild resources are going to miss you. 

Texture | Coars

\ko
adjective: crude or unrefined; rou



Nadia Reimer | *Tarantula*



Jay Miller | *Ground Squirrel*

Tony Pianalto | *Coyote*

se
kors\
rough





Jay Miller | *Elk*



Tony Pinalto | *Swift Fox*





Marc Murrell | Crappie

Texture | Glossy

\gla-se\

adjective: having a surface of luster or brightness

Karole Erikson | *Cobweb*





Jay Miller | *Gizzard Shad*



Jay Miller | *Leopard Frogs*



Tony Pianalto | *Waterfall*



Marc Murrell | *Walleye*



Marc Murrell | *Fish Bone*

Texture | Gritty

\gri-te\

adjective: having strong qualities; resolute; sandy



Marc Murrell | *Zebra Mussels*



Nadia Reimer | *Crayfish*

Jay Miller | *Rock and Lichen*







Tony Pianalto | *Buck In Velvet*

Danny Brown | *Armadillo*



Bob Gress | *Massasauga*







Marc Murrell | *Worm Bait*

Texture | Spongy

\spen-je\
adjective: elastic; not firm or solid; porous; moist





Bob Gress | *Barred Tiger Salamander*



Bob Gress | *Great Plains Toad*





Texture | Downy

\dau-ne\
adjective: covered with fine soft hair or feathers; fluffy



Nadia Reimer | *Ring-necked Pheasant*

Jay Miller | *Double-crested Cormorant*



Bob Gress | *Goat's Beard or Western Salsify*









Dan Witt | *Tricolored Heron*



© Dan Witt | *Madras*

Gail Huddle | *Blue Jay*



Karole Erikson | *Canada Geese and Goslings*



Nadia Reimer | *Common Snapping Turtle*





Jon Blumb | *Burn*

Texture | Chap

\CHap\
verb: crack due to dehydration
noun: a depression in a surface



Nadia Reimer | *Turkey Feet*





Tony Pianalto | *Buckeye Butterfly*

Texture | Silky

\sil-ke\
silky

adjective: smooth; covered with fine soft hairs



Karole Erikson | *Spiderwort*





Karole Erikson | *Catclaw Sensitive Briar*

2016 Wild About Kansas Photo Contest | Winners

Wildlife | Adult Division

- 1 | Tony Pianalto, "Majestic"
 - 2 | Kevin Fruechting, "Twin Toms"
 - 3 | Chuck Gibson, "Hummingbird"
- Honorable Mention | Frank Orth, "Screech Owl"

Wildlife | Youth Division

- 1 | Isaac Shultz, "Buddy"
 - 2 | Solomon Shultz, "Cute"
 - 3 | Madison Larson, "Groundhog"
- Honorable Mention | Lily Shultz, "Lily Frog"

A-1



A-3



Y-1



A-2



Y-3



Y-H.M.



Y-2



A-H.M.



2016 Wild About Kansas Photo Contest | Winners

Outdoor Recreation | Adult Division

- 1 | Chenoa Casebier, "Sleeping Under The Stars"
- 2 | Jeff Doggendorf, "Dry Rattlesnake Creek Riverbed"
- 3 | Kayla Borell, "Rise To Wake"
- Honorable Mention | Rick McPherson, "Frostbite Regatta"

Outdoor Recreation | Youth Division

- 1 | Madison Larson, "Watching Fireworks"
- 2 | Elly Gossard, "Sisters Exploring"
- 3 | Isaac Shultz, "Family Time"
- Honorable Mention | John Walker, "Nice Shot"





Y-1



A-2



A-H.M.



A-3

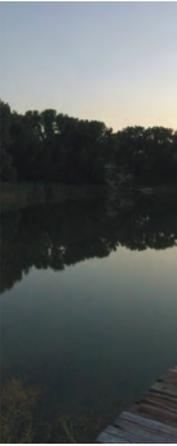
2016 Wild About Kansas Photo Contest | Winners

Landscape | *Adult Division*

- 1 | Robert Dilla, "Sunset Through The Keyhole"
- 2 | Tim Wood, "On Konza Prairie"
- 3 | Nicki Tomlinson, "Autumn Reflections"
- Honorable Mention | Chuck Gibson, "Lovewell"

Landscape | *Youth Division*

- 1 | Johanna Walker, "Cider"
- 2 | Yazmin Adams, "Fun Under The Sun"
- 3 | Elly Gossard, "Calm Lake Day"
- Honorable Mention | Cloey Kennemur, "Sitting On The Dock Of The Bay"





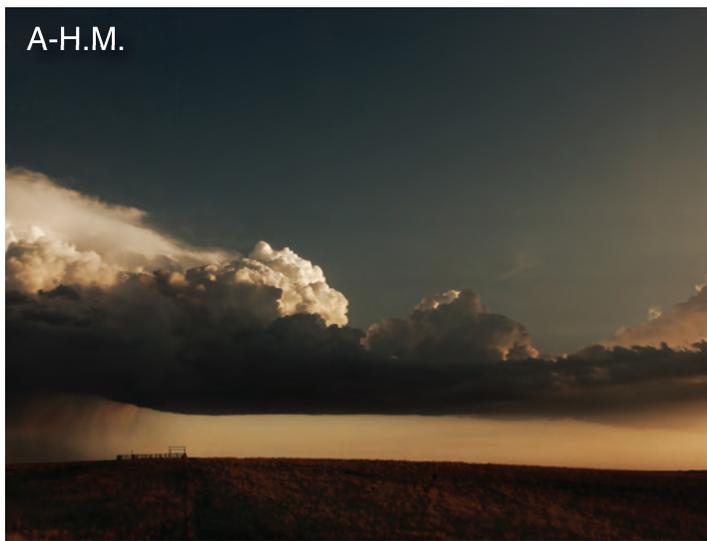
Y-H.M.



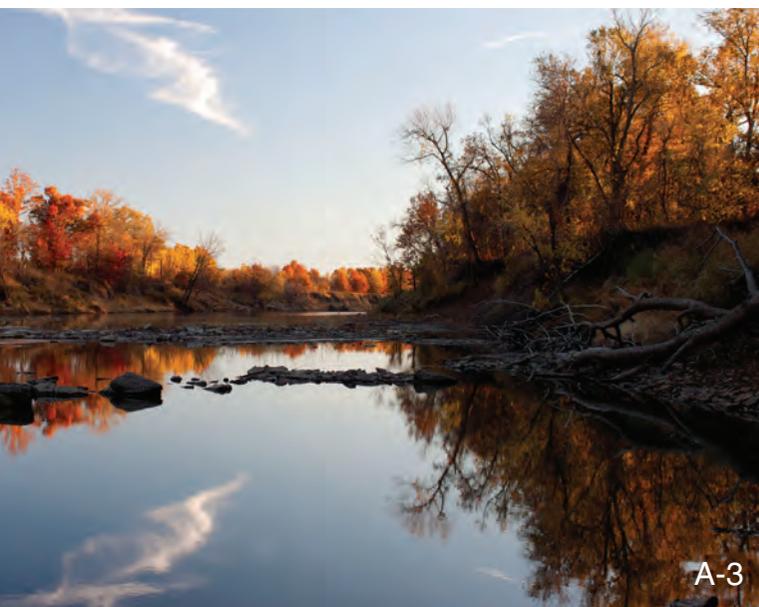
Y-3



A-2



A-H.M.

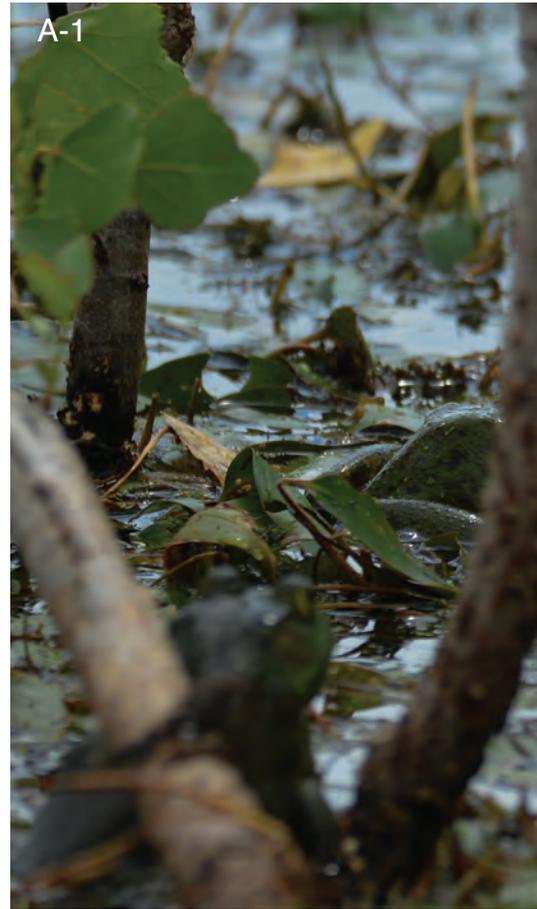


A-3



Y-2

2016 Wild About Kansas Photo Contest | Winners





Other Species | *Adult Division*

- 1 | Jaci Novak, "Snack Time"
- 2 | Mary Mejia, "Honey Bee At Sunflower"
- 3 | Chuck Gibson, "Frog"

Honorable Mention | Rick McPherson, "Bison At Maxwell Refuge"

Other Species | *Youth Division*

- 1 | Lily Shultz, "Gathering"
- 2 | Kieren Shultz, "Big"
- 3 | Corley Becker, "Resting Frog"

Honorable Mention | Johanna Walker, "Blending In"



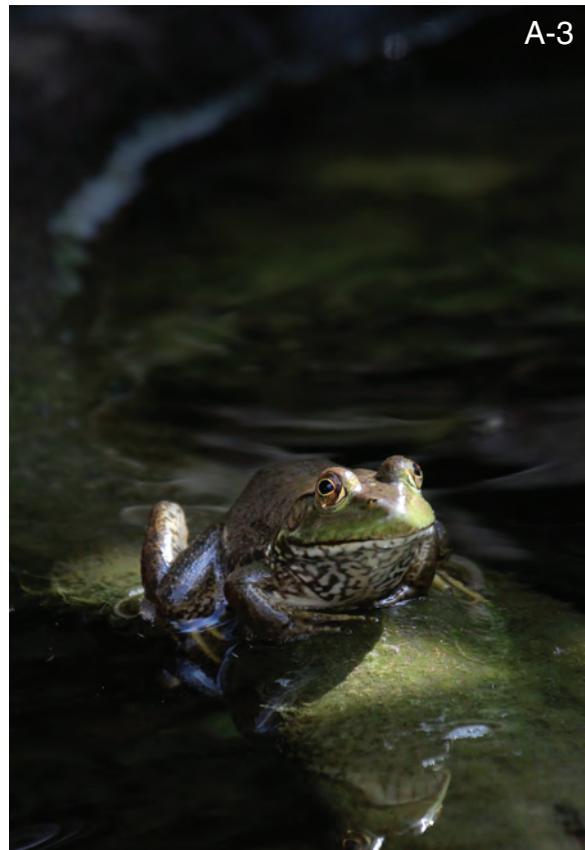
A-H.M.



Y-1



A-2



A-3

2016 Wild About Kansas Photo Contest | Winners



A-1



Y-2



Y-1



A-H.M.



Y-3



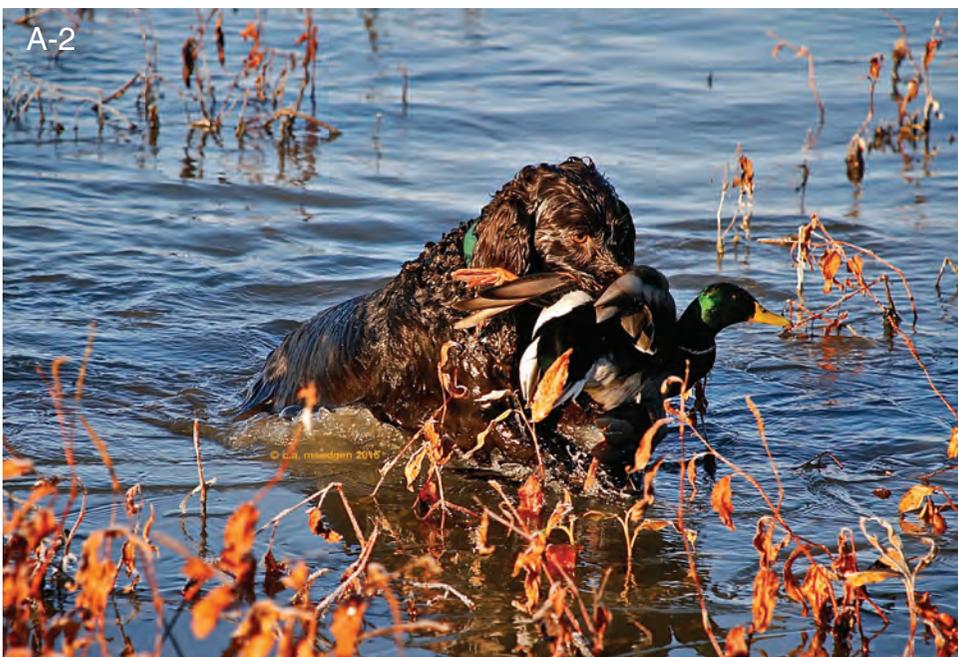
A-3

Hunt/Fish | *Adult Division*

- 1 | Dale Benedict, "Spring Turkey Opening Day"
 - 2 | Clarence Maedgen, "Breaking Ice"
 - 3 | Tony Pianalto, "Rooster"
- Honorable Mention | Kristin Vinduska, "My Retirement Plan"

Hunt/Fish | *Youth Division*

- 1 | Ashley Fields, "Crappie Bait"
- 2 | Kieren Shultz, "Peaceful"
- 3 | Solomon Shultz, "Fishin'"



A-2

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Details on the 2017 Wild About Kansas photo contest will be made available on ksoutdoors.com in early spring.

The Nature
Conservancy



Get outdoors!

nature.org/kansas

No Wi-Fi
required.

Chris Helzer photo

